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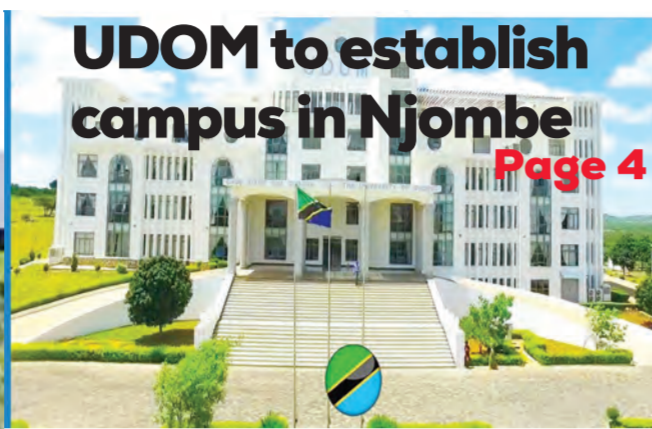
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Festival spending timid, even 'shocking'

There is no family unity these days, every household thinks of its challenges and difficulties. Those who do not afford to get food cannot think of buying clothes, leave alone chickens or inviting each other

By Guardian Reporters

UNEASE was widespread among residents in the city of Dar es Salaam as Christmas approached, with a section of those interviewed saying that high costs of living impinge on preparations for celebrating Christmas and New Year. Elizabeth Boniphace, a tailor in Maswa town said that this year's business situation during this festive season is shocking, with traders scrambling to get whatever they can for their families, almost in vain. Higher prices for essential products and low ability to earn push many people to take the key annual celebration nearly as any other day, attending places of worship and return home to a minimum of festival atmosphere. Rhodha Alen, a Kisesa resident in Mwanza Region said that the difficulty in getting money



Expansion work on the road stretch from Mlimani City shopping complex to the University of Dar es Salaam, up to the Sam Nujoma Road junction close to the Water Resources Institute being carried out yesterday. It is meant to reduce congestion of vehicles and prevent accidents. Photo: Correspondent Miraji Msala

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

The Management and Staff of The Guardian Ltd wish our esteemed customers and advertisers Merry Christmas And Happy New Year.

Eight killed in evening road crash, six injured

STORY ON PAGE 2



Bahati Ndingo (R), the Mbarali MP, explains to PMO deputy minister Umy Nderiananga (C) (Policy, Parliament and Coordination) on the disaster situation after heavy rains and strong winds, when the deputy minister visited the area over the weekend. Left is Mbeya District Commissioner Beno Malisa. Photo: Correspondent Nebart Msokwa

Holiday train passengers left in the cold at Arusha station

By Correspondent Marc Nkwame, Arusha

NEARLY 200 passengers supposed to be travelling on a Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) annual Christmas and New-Year train were stuck for two days at the Arusha Station, spending nights out in the cold with children. It all started on Thursday, December 21, when more than 150 people in Arusha bought their TRC train tickets, hoping to travel from the northern city to Dar es Salaam aboard the passenger wagons, but somehow the locomotive failed to show up. They were stuck at the railway station for 12 hours with the TRC management telling them that the train was on its way. Other would-be passengers were also waiting at other stations located along the way at Usa River, Rundugai (Kikuletwa station) and Moshi. Khalfani Rajabu, one of the travellers, said the train was scheduled to depart at 2.00 pm but 24 hours later they were still stuck at the terminal without any car in sight.

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Initial DR Congo results trickle in after the chaotic elections

KINSHASA

Initial results from a presidential poll in DR Congo began to trickle in on Friday after shambolic elections spread over several days which the authorities deemed successful.

The central African nation's electoral commission, Ceni, announced results for Congolese voters living in South Africa, Belgium, France, Canada and the United States.

The results represent a minuscule proportion of the overall votes cast, but they indicated a provisional lead for incumbent President Felix Tshisekedi, who is running for a second term.

Poor but mineral-rich Democratic Republic of Congo held four concurrent polls on Wednesday to elect the president, lawmakers for national and provincial assemblies as well as local councillors. Massive delays and bureaucratic chaos marred the vote and some polling booths were unable to open at all.

Ceni extended voting in some areas until Thursday.

In a statement, the electoral commission said that no polling station was authorised to open on Friday.

However, voting continued in some places on Friday, according to officials, especially in the more remote areas of the vast country the size of western Europe.

People were casting votes in Kilembwe, in the Fizi territory of South Kivu province, in the east, for example, after voting materials only arrived late on Thursday.

"Everything should be finished by (the afternoon) at the latest," the territory's administrator Sammy Kalonji told AFP.

Didi Manara, from the Ceni, said that "at least 97 percent" of the roughly

75,000 polling stations in the DRC had been able to open.

Given the size of the country, he said, this represented a "miracle". DR Congo is roughly the size of continental western Europe.

In a preliminary statement on Friday, the Carter Center -- which observed the elections -- said there had been "serious irregularities" at 21 out of 109 polling stations it visited. The ballot had proceeded "relatively well" in the other 88.

In 24 polling stations, its observers identified technical problems with electronic voting devices, the US-based group added.

While the Congolese government acknowledged delays late on Wednesday, it hailed the efforts of voters and the electoral commission.

Results from the presidential election in the Congolese diaspora were published on Friday night.

Ceni is set to start announcing provisional results for the DRC's 26 provinces on Saturday.

Around 44 million Congolese in the nation of 100 million were registered to vote, and more than 100,000 candidates were running for various positions.

Tshisekedi, 60, is considered the front-runner in the first-past-the-vote presidential vote, especially given that he is facing a divided opposition.

The main opposition candidates are gynaecologist Denis Mukwege, 68, the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate; 58-year-old business magnate and former provincial governor Moise Katumbi; and 67-year-old ex-oil executive Martin Fayulu.

They have all criticised the election's disarray, and warned against the potential for electoral fraud.

AGENCIES



Zanzibar Community Development, Gender and Elderly Director Dr Salum Khamis Rashid (R) hands over food supply to Zanzibar's Orphanage Centre donated by the Vocational Training Authority. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Eight killed in evening road crash, six injured

By Guardian Correspondent, Kigoma

EIGHT people died and six others injured in a head-on collision involving a Toyota probox saloon car and a lorry belonging to a construction firm, the China Henan International Cooperation Group (CHICO) along the Kibondo-Kakonko road in Kibondo District, Kigoma Region.

Regional Commissioner Thobias

Andengeny said the accident involving the lorry, T833 DUA and the Probox, T 890 DYZ happened on Friday night at around 5 pm at Mumkugwa village, with the car heading to Kakonko from Kibondo.

Until early yesterday the bodies of six people had been identified and taken by their relatives, with two others still preserved at the Kibondo District Hospital, he said,

urged those with worries on a rela-

tive to try and identify the two deceased persons.

Those already recognised are Hamisi Chaurembo (27) (the Probox driver), Bernadina Ruben (22), Madua Asukile, Ntiganiza Bihezako (67), Vedastus Paul (28) and an infant, Vladimir Vedastus (1), he said.

Out of the six injured, three were treated and discharged and three need more treatment, slated for transfer to Bugando Referral

Hospital, Mwanza. They include the lorry driver, Flavian Felishian (28), said to be injured on the head and chest. Others are Juma Saidi (27), Daniel Samwel (33), Silvanus Muhigwa (43), Sara Bundala and Dori Mafumbo (22).

The RC expressed sadness on the accident in condolences to relatives of the deceased, urging residents be watchful on the road, especially during the festival season as it often sees a sharp increase in

vehicles on the road.

Motorists should take precautions while on the road at this period to reduce unnecessary accidents, the RC stated.

Filemon Maungu, the regional police commander, said that investigation show that the Probox driver was in excessive speed, failing to handle the car at a sharp corner, rushing into a head-on collision with the lorry.

Festival spending timid, even 'shocking'

FROM PAGE 1

has forced many people to reduce festival spending in order to meet other family needs, especially the return to school in two weeks' time.

She said that the way of life has changed, families are not inviting each other to eat and celebrate because there is no extra food in homes. Instead of buying poultry or goats for slaughter during Christmas, families make sure they have money for school needs.

"We are not eating well during festivals. There is no way because life has pushed us to this situation," she asserted, while Emmanuel Kudema, a Maswa resident, said that unlike in previous years, parents spending December in an unhappy mood, owing to responsibilities awaited in January.

Helene Juma, who lives at Rwamisheny ward in Kagera Region, said that there are people who cannot afford two meals a day, so for them festival spending is a dream.

"There is no family unity these days, every household thinks of its challenges and difficulties. Those who do not afford to get food cannot think of buying clothes, leave alone chickens or inviting each other," she said.

Joseph Ngeleja, the director of Juniors and Child Foundation in Maswa District, said that in this period there is a poor response from people to come and engage with the children as it was usually the case, a situation which makes the children unhappy.

Price of various food products have steadily risen over the past year, with sugar moving from 2800/- to 3500/- per kilo, edible oil leaping from 5,000/- to 8,000/- per litre while meat prices rose from 6,000/- to 10,000/- per kilo/-



Haematologist at the Muhimbili National Hospital and President of the Haemophilia Society of Tanzania, Dr. Stella Rwezaula (C) speaks to journalists on the campaign to raise public awareness of hemophilia held in Zanzibar over the weekend. Others are Director of the Department of Medicine and Internal Diseases of the One Nazi Hospital in Zanzibar, Dr. Hafidh Sheha Hassan (R) and hospital's haematologist, Dr. Thuwein Nassor Said (L). Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

However rice price has decreased from 3,200/- to 2,600 and beans from 3,500/- to 2,800/- while potatoes prices declined from 1,200/- to 1,000/- per kilogramme, with goat prices soaring to 180,000/- from 90,000/- earlier. Tomatoes were being sold at 6,000/- per bag and onions sell at 3,000/- for a similar measure, market information indicates.

Naftali Joram, the chairman of Simiyu town market, said that business has been hard over a number of weeks despite prices

of many products being stable.

Mussa Hussein, a tailor at Muliunga ward in Kahama municipality, said he used to get a lot of tendersto make different styles of clothes a month before the festival season, but things have changed.

Audax Elpidius, a cloth trader at the Bukoba municipality market, said that despite bringing new clothes in his shop, customers are nowhere to be seen.

Dr Isaac Safari, a lecturer at St. Augustine University (SAUT) in

Mwanza said that hardship during festivals have been there but this year's situation is harder.

Jonathan Mnyela, a communications specialist and economist resident in Maswa, said that the partly festival atmosphere is tied to income realities that Tanzanians face, while Sengerema District fellow economist Damian Mosha cited shortage of products due to high demand, as punishing those with little cash to spare.

Dr Albina Chuwa, head of the National Bureau of Statistics

(NBS) when reached for comment said that inflation was stable at single digit levels, at 3.2 per cent on average, while food products inflation had this year climbed by 28.2 per cent.

The harvest season is here for vegetables and fresh maize, so inflation is normal, she said. The government is taking measures to control inflationary pressures to avoid a negative impact in living conditions, the statistician general asserted.

Holiday train passengers left in the cold at Arusha station

FROM PAGE 1

Rukia Mohamed, a mother who spent nights at the station with children, lamented that the station officers kept telling them that the train was on its way to Arusha from Dar es Salaam but it never showed up.

"Bus fares are very high at the moment, and that is why we chose to ride the train," she said, noting that waiting for the train was more costly as they slept in the cold with nothing to eat.

Another delay victim, Timotheo Zebedayo said most people had only the train fare without extra money to buy food, while another traveller, Mary Mpanda, said the Arusha Station had no toilets for passengers, compelling them to pay to use facilities near the spot.

Victor Ningo, the station master, explained that the train expected to pick the passengers in Arusha developed mechanical problems upon reaching Mombo, well within Tanga Region and had to be repaired.

TRC contemplated hiring buses to take the passengers to Kilimanjaro so that they may board at the Moshi station, but it wasn't done. The train arrived after a two days delay, picking the totally exhausted, hungry and unmused passengers at the terminal.

TRC usually operates train services between Dar and Arusha during end year holiday season to cash in on anticipated rush, but often the services are a whimper of what is expected, observers noted.

HST set establish specialised care centres for haemophilia

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

THE Haemophilia Society of Tanzania (HST) is set establish specialised care centres for haemophilia as part of supporting the victims of the bleeding related disorders in Tanzania.

"We want also to enhance professional training, and raise public awareness. Our strategies focus on improving diagnosis and treatment accessibility, thereby transforming lives," said Dr. Stella Rwezoula, HST president and MUHAS lecturer when speaking to journalists on awareness raising on haemophilia in Zanzibar, Haematologist at the Muhimbili National Hospital.

Dr Rwezoula said: "We have only 350 of approximately 6,200 patients in Tanzania mainland and the islands who are diagnosed, and this state is not only in Tanzania but worldwide 97% of people with the condition have not been diagnosed and only 3% know they have it. This is a hereditary disease that affects both men and women, but mostly men."

She said: "The HST's latest campaign, launching in Zanzibar on December 12, 2023, seeks to elevate haemophilia awareness to new heights. Through a series of impactful events, including media engagement, healthcare collaboration, and public education, we aim to break down barriers, dispel myths, and highlight the realities of living with haemophilia."

Haematology Specialist from Mnazi Mmoja Hospital - Zanzibar, Dr. Suwen Nassor said: "Currently the government of Zanzibar has purchased diagnostic equipment for haemophilia testing, so I urge everyone to go and get tested. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate HST for coming to Zanzibar and setting up a centre to help treat patients in the country rather than having to go abroad."

One of the patients, Dominic Seye said: "I lived with haemophilia without knowing it. When I was 9 years old, I was given an

injection which causes excessive bleeding, later I was diagnosed with the condition. This disease has led to many challenges that limit me from fully participating in economic and developmental activities. I would like to request the government to construct centres to offer these services in every district to raise awareness in the communities and relieve sufferers from the burden of having to travel outside of the country to seek treatment".

The Haemophilia Society of Tanzania remains steadfast in its commitment to changing the narrative of haemophilia in Tanzania and beyond. With continued support and collaboration, we strive towards a world where haemophilia no longer limits potential, but instead, is a condition met with understanding, compassion, and optimal care.

HST came into existence in 2002 as a beacon of hope in the fight against haemophilia. Committed to improving care and support for individuals with haemophilia and related bleeding disorders in Tanzania, HST's vision is a future where every person with haemophilia receives proper treatment and leads a healthy, fulfilling life. Our mission is to advocate for, educate, and connect the haemophilia community, fostering a supportive network for affected individuals and their families.

Haemophilia, a rare genetic disorder impairing blood clotting, affects millions globally, including an estimated 6,000 to 12,000 individuals in Tanzania. Yet, only a fraction receives adequate treatment due to challenges like underdiagnosis, limited healthcare access, high treatment costs, and societal stigma.

Globally, haemophilia remains a significant health concern, with varying degrees of severity and a need for lifelong management. In Tanzania, these challenges are compounded by a lack of awareness and resources.



Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation Director General Mohammed Salum (R) and LOCA Muhendislik Gemi Mak PLas Ve Gd. San Tic Ltd Sti manager Hiyadet Cetin based in Turkey show the agreement of building an ambulance boat shortly after signing the document in Mwanza over the weekend. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Prisons improve curriculum of rehabilitation programmes

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

THE Prisons Service has started the improvement of the curriculum of rehabilitation of prisoners, which is the implementation of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's directives to boost criminal justice in the country.

Mzee Ramadhani Nyamka, Prison Services commissioner general unveiled this development here over the weekend when launched the preparatory work of behavioural rehabilitation curricula for prisoners starting at the diploma and degree levels.

The plan aims to improve some areas that were seen to have shortcomings that contribute in one way or another to criminals repeating their mistakes when they become citizens.

He said that the new curricula will be used to teach prison officers and soldiers at their colleges so that they can go and provide appropriate rehabilitation training to prisoners in prisons.

"We're given instructions by President Samia that the prison force should ensure that rehabilitation programmes for criminals are carried out at a suitable and acceptable level," said Commissioner General Nyamka.

Nyamka said even the recommendations of the President's Commission that he created for the improvement of criminal justice institutions, one of his recommendations urged the Prison Service to improve its curricula and the goal was to have rehabilitation programmes.

He said that the curriculum will be able to reform the prisoners who enter the prison, when they finish their sentences and return to citizenship, join them with other Tanzanians in the process of building the national economy so that they appear reformed.

He said that the work of repairing the wreckers is a professional job, so it needs guidelines and curricula that reflect the current situation and are in line with time.

He said, curriculum re-

view, proper training for prison officers and soldiers in the correctional industry should be given due weight within the Army.

"We have decided to revise the curricula in collaboration with the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET), the Institute of Adult Education, Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) and a team of prison experts by sitting together to come up with a curriculum that has been adapted," said Nyamka.

He said that despite curriculum improvements, the society has a great responsibility to help prisoners who are finishing their sentences who are already becoming skilled so that they can be economically independent and not stigmatize them.

"Sometimes when a prisoner comes out of prison using rehabilitation programs in prison, he has had a profession or skills that he did not have when he entered, when he comes out he is a good carpenter, the community should be ready to help them" he said

He said, curriculum re-



Silver Crescent Tanzania coordinator Kadir Komurcu (R) launches one of five the water wells at Mbaramo village in Muheza District drilled by his institution based in Turkey for 100m/- over the weekend. Left is the institution's coordinator in Tanga Region Omari Shariff. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

'Z'bar sardines processing plant is almost complete'

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR is expected to start injecting millions of money after the completion of a modern sardines' processing factory constructed at Kama area in Unguja West A District.

The plant will have capacity to produce 20 tonnes of dried sardines per day worth over 200m/-.

Speaking during the laying of a foundation stone for the plant, permanent secretary, Blue Economy and Fisheries Ministry, Suleiman Aboud Jumbe said the factory will be of its kind in the whole East African coastal region.

He said sardines was one of the strategic products in the Isles, so improving it was the government's priority for the current financial year.

He said that under the leadership of President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, sardines production has grown from 2,405 tonnes worth 10,33bn/- to 21,827 tonnes worth 89,31bn/-.

He said the construction of the plant was vital because the sardines' production for export has been growing from 3,579 tonnes with the value of 12,3bn/- in 2020 to over 9000 tonnes injecting 35bn/- in 2023.

He further said that achievements recorded in the sardines sector have been triggered by an increase of production in the fishing industry from 38,107 tonnes in 2020 to 80,085 tonnes of fish worth 569bn/- in

2023.

"The development has greatly helped to also increase employment to youth thus improving their lives. Recent statistics show that the fishing sector has continued to grow rapidly bringing positive impacts to people and the nation," he said.

The PS said that the contribution of the fishing industry in the blue economy has increased to an average of 17.40 percent, which is a great success and the construction of the sardines processing factory will increase income to the traders, fishers and the nation at large.

Zanzibar Fisheries Company (ZAFICO) director, Aminri Haidar Mshenga said the implementation of the project is an implantation of President Dr Mwinyi's promises that he issued to the sardines fishers.

He said Zanzibar has approximately 16,000 sardines' sellers where 14000 are in Unguja and 12,000 in Pemba saying that a total of three coastal areas have been set aside for the processing of the sardines which are Kama, Fungu refu and Ndagoni.

"The project is set to spend 23m/- which involves construction of two factories, sardines cleaning and boiling buildings, a cold storage building, an ice making building and a trading area," he said.

He added that a total of 10,000 sardines' traders will secure jobs where its first phase is expected to be completed in February next year.

HAPPY Holidays

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AfDB champions home-grown answers to Africa's debt hitches

By Special Correspondent

THE African Development Bank Group is facilitating the establishment of the African Debt Managers Initiative Network (ADMIN), which will bring together experts to find home-grown solutions to the continent's debt challenges.

Eric Ogunleye, Acting Director and Division Manager for Policy Management at the African Development Bank's African Development Institute, told debt managers from across Africa that the network would facilitate capacity development for institutions and practitioners on the continent, in particular, reorienting them towards responsible borrowing and transparent debt management.

He spoke at a meeting in Abuja last Thursday to advance the formation of the network.

"The ADMIN will help identify and raise awareness of common areas for policy dialogue and capacity building for debt management and sustainability in the African Development Bank's regional member countries and facilitate interventions by the Bank and other institutions working on public debt management issues in Africa," Ogunleye said.

Debt vulnerability and distress are rising in Africa, requiring concerted efforts to address and reverse the trend. According to official figures, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa's debt burden had increased rapidly, with debt service payments averaging about 18 percent of total government revenues.

One of the factors driving debt accumulation across Africa over the past decade has been the shift by countries towards costly commercial debt. This shift has been associated with less

transparent loan terms compounded by debt collateralisation, domestic arrears accumulation, and increasing contingent liabilities from state-owned enterprises and public-private partnerships.

As part of a continental effort to address the challenges, the African Development Bank has developed strategic instruments to guide debt management in Africa. These include launching a Public Finance Management Academy for Africa (PFMA), which is deepening partnerships with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other global and regional public finance management institutions in Africa.

The Bank also identified weak governance, inefficient and large public investment programmes, and rising defence spending as causes of debt accumulation. In some cases, countries had "hidden debt" obligations that were not on the public books.

Ogunleye said the African Debt Managers Initiative Network will seek partnership and collaboration with development partners engaged in debt sustainability and public financial management. It will mobilise innovative debt financing, design and implement sound debt management administration and reporting systems, and conduct debt sustainability and risk assessments.

Nigeria's Debt Management Office Director General, Patience Oniha, said an African debt managers' network is important because African countries have many debt similarities, adding that it allows practitioners to share common challenges, explore opportunities, learn from each other, and advance public debt and financial management.



Minister of State in the Vice President's Office (Union and Environment) Dr Selemani Jafo plants a tree at Msalato in Dodoma. The event was organised by Habari Conservation Organisation on Saturday. Photo: Guardian Correspondent

Kilosa DC needs 5.3bn/- to restore infrastructure damaged by floods

By Guardian Correspondent, Morogoro

KILOSA District Council in Morogoro region needs 5.3bn/- to restore infrastructure damaged by the floods that occurred early this month in various areas of the district.

Kilosa District Commissioner, Shaka Hamdu Shaka said this before the Morogoro Regional Commissioner, Adam Malima during a visit to review the implementation of his instructions given to the officials of the regional government to restore the infrastructure damaged by the floods.

DC Shaka said the flood caused the

death of three people and affected 1,470 households demolished 316 houses and 1,042 others were surrounded by water including 303 acres of farmland.

He said that the homeless victims have been kept in two isolated schools, while the necessary needs are nets, food, mattresses, water treatment medicines, soap, clothes, and school supplies for the children who lost their supplies.

The DC said the floods caused three bridges to break and caused a lack of communication between Kilosa Town and other areas.

"Until now, the assessment made

in relation to these floods amounting to 5.3bn/- is needed to restore the infrastructure damaged by the floods," said Shaka.

Kilosa MP, Prof Paramagamba Kabudi, thanked President Samia Suluhu Hassan for providing funds of 900m/- spent to build water channels to improve infrastructure in the District.

RC Malima also wanted deliberate steps to be taken if he wanted the citizens living in the valleys and streams to leave by providing them with safe areas to avoid frequent floods.

He said Kilosa District has had a long

history with frequent floods that cause damage to infrastructure, people's property and even cause deaths.

He said it is not a good thing to keep complaining every time there is a flood, because right now various measures need to be taken and more research done to control the frequent floods in the district.

He mentioned one of the strategies that should be taken is to harvest water by digging dams that will collect water that will be used in other human activities including irrigation and other common uses during the dry season.



Dar es Salaam residents look at the scene of an accident at Fire Station along Morogoro Road yesterday. Photo Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole.

UDOM to establish its campus in Njombe TC

By Guardian Correspondent, Njombe

THE government has allocated 18bn/- to start the construction of a new campus of the University of Dodoma (UDOM) in Njombe Town Council with the aim of providing services close to the people.

UDOM vice chancellor Prof. Lughano Kusiluka made the statement at the Regional Consulting Committee (RCC) over the weekend here.

Prof. Kusiluka said the proposed facility will be the first UDOM campus in the Southern Highlands regions and the country at large.

Prof. Kusiluka said that due to the criteria, the management of the university has recommended that the headquarters of the campus be built in an isolated area in Njombe Town Council near Njombe Secondary School (NJOSS).

He said that the area has a size of 110 acres and that they also

intend to use the area of Ihalula with a size of 320 acres for training.

"We recommend to the authorities and leadership of the Njombe region that the headquarters of the campus of the University of Dodoma, Njombe region should be in this area in the city but the area in the village of Ihalula with 320 acres should also be given for the construction of the campus because the programs that we hope to start are those that reflect the economic and social activities of this region and neighboring regions," he said.

Prof. Kusiluka also said that the UDOM campus will start with few courses including animal husbandry, agriculture, communication and various technologies.

Dr Evaristo Mtitu, assistant coordinator, Higher Education for Economic Transformation Project (HEET) said that the project will be executed for six years and will start enrolling students by 2026.

"We're asking for the cooperation of the people so that UDOM does not stop because this project is for six years 2021 - 2026, the college should be up and running," said Dr Mtitu.

Njombe Regional Commissioner, Anthony Mtaka said that the people of Njombe have been interested for a long time to see the region have a university while thanking President Samia Suluhu Hassan for listening and caring for the requests of the people of Njombe.

RC Mtaka also asked the citizens to use various opportunities in investment that will bring competition in the entire economic issue.

Njombe Urban MP, Deo Mwanika said the skills that will be produced will bring economic reforms to the people of Njombe region.

"So I ask you to focus on all the courses at the end of the day for us, don't forget business and entrepreneurship," said Mwanika.

UN agencies support mudflow victims in Hanang

By Guardian Reporter

THE United Nations, in close partnership with the Tanzanian government is actively responding to the severe mudslides and flooding in Hanang District, Manyara Region.

This follows the initial assessments reports, a coordinated and robust response has been implemented to address the critical needs of the affected people and communities.

In a statement issued yesterday, UN said the Tanzanian

government continues its comprehensive search, rescue, and recovery operations. It has also established designated displacement sites for relocating affected communities. In conjunction with humanitarian organizations, the government is providing essential food and non-food items (NFI) to those affected by the disaster.

According to a statement, the United Nations agencies have responded quickly and are playing a crucial role in mobilizing additional supplies to assess and ad-

dress the immediate needs and long-term recovery of the affected populations. "Our ongoing efforts include the swift mobilization of food supplies to meet the urgent needs of the affected communities by the World Food Programme (WFP)."

A central focus of the joint efforts is the prevention of disease outbreaks, with special attention to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs, particularly in displacement sites.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Na-

tions Children's Fund (UNICEF) are leading efforts to restore clean water supplies and promote health and hygiene practices.

Specifically, the Deployment of cholera rapid testing kits and essential

health supplies by WHO to combat the threat of communicable diseases in the aftermath of the floods; and the quick provision of relief items by UNICEF for WASH services, including hygiene kits, water tanks, purification tabs, and Persona Protec-

tion Equipment (PPE) have been essential in disease prevention.

UNICEF has also provided various non-food items, including mattresses, blankets, sleeping bags, children's clothes and footwear, buckets and soap and supported Risk Communication and Community Engagement, and Mental Health and Psychosocial support activities in the affected areas.

The distribution of dignity kits by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to support women and girls in the affected areas;

the kits, containing a khangha, menstrual pads, bath soap, multiple pairs of underwear, washing soap, toothpaste, and a toothbrush, all packed inside 20 litre buckets will cater to the needs of women and girls.

The Tanzanian government's ongoing search, rescue, and recovery operations are being bolstered by this UN support, as well as the provision of essential services and supplies in the sites established to support those displaced.

President Samia Suluhu Has-

san urged proactive measures, emphasizing the relocation of communities from flood-prone areas and calling for the enhancement of national disaster preparedness and response capabilities. This unified response from the United Nations and the Tanzanian government highlights the international community's commitment to providing relief and recovery assistance to the people of Hanang District in their time of need.

Mobile connectivity unlocks the new horizons for Africa

By Sylvia Duruson

AFRICA'S mobile economy is burgeoning as internet adoption rises swiftly across the continent.

Over 50% of the world's fastest-expanding economies are located here.

In 2023 alone, the mobile industry contributed a monumental \$170 billion to Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP, representing an 8.1% total share. Mobile penetration rates currently stand at 43% with about 489 million subscribers. This figure could surge to 88% by 2030 as smartphones and high-speed 4G/5G networks continue proliferating rapidly.

The breakneck expansion of connectivity and device accessibility is profoundly transforming lifestyles while empowering industries across Africa. In stark contrast to global downturns, Africa's video gaming market and online casinos are flourishing vibrantly. South Africa epitomizes this upward trend, projected to see a 12% gaming CAGR from 2021-2026. The enthusiastic launch of multiple localized casinos, passionate indie developers, and skyrocketing demand for top titles are jointly propelling market growth.

Access to learning technologies has also benefited enormously. Over 150 EdTech startups now operate across 25 African countries, nimbly leveraging scalable e-learning platforms to deliver creative yet affordable solutions to schools

and universities.

The global EdTech boom in 2020 catalyzed vital investments into the previously struggling regional industry.

Additionally, mobile payments are aggressively promoting financial inclusion by enabling digital transactions without formal bank accounts. Kenya's globally recognized M-Pesa system demonstrates the immense promise of mobile money for profitably banking the unbanked at scale.

As data costs fall precipitously and budget device models become ubiquitous across Africa, technology adoption will only accelerate further. For instance, 1 GB of mobile data now costs around \$0.48 in Algeria, compared to the elevated global average of over \$3. Cheaper smartphones like a recent \$160 Airtel Rwanda release have also improved access.

With 60% of Africans aged below 25, younger generations continue enthusiastically powering the adoption of modern gadgets and services. According to the United Nations, Africa's youth population could balloon to a staggering 2.4 billion by 2050. Such monumental demographic shifts spur the utilization of technologies, unlike ageing societies such as Japan.

As mobile penetration widens forcefully in the coming decade, Africa's swelling connectedness unlocks promising new socio-economic possibilities for citizens and businesses.



Health minister Umyy Mwalimu (C) cuts a ribbon to launch Kisimatui health centre at Pongwe ward in Tanga Region on Saturday, Photo: Correspondent Hamida Kamchalla.

Zanzibar signs pact with Australian firm to execute wind power project

By Guardian Reporter, Zanzibar

ZANZIBAR'S Ministry of Water, Energy and Minerals has signed an agreement with an Australian Powgex Energy Ltd for the research and execution of a wind power project worth \$1.2 billion which is expected to produce 450 megawatts.

In the project, Unguja will produce 300 megawatts with Pemba producing 150 megawatts thus eradicating persistent power shortages in the Indian Ocean Ar-

chipelago. Speaking during the signing ceremony, Minister Hassan Shaibu Kadura commended the company for choosing Zanzibar and urged it to fast-track the work in order to bring joy to the citizens.

He welcomed others from various parts in the World to come and invest in Zanzibar assuring of a conducive environment and full government support.

"This collaboration has to continue, this is the biggest project of its kind on the isles. Its infrastructure will be set up

in the sea, so there will be minimal troubles to the people," he said.

Charles Lwanda, Powgex Energy project director said the conducive investment environment put by the government has attracted the company to the Island.

"The multi-billion dollar project will not only help Zanzibar to achieve its goals, but also improve the lives of people while also having extra power," he said.

He said a feasibility study will be con-

ducted before the project's implementation begins.

"The feasibility will engage construction of relevant infrastructure for the production of power; it will also help protect the environment because its infrastructures will be installed in the sea," he said.

Lwanda further said that the power will be produced to cater the needs of industrial use while transporting the surplus electricity outside Zanzibar through submarine cables.



Majengo Ward Councillor in Muheza District, Tanga Region Mukadam Sabuni speaks moments after food supply donation for his residents from Silver Crescent based in Turkey over the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Steven William

Ghana legalises cannabis cultivation for medical and industrial use

ACCRA

GHANA'S Parliament has marked a historic milestone by legalizing cannabis cultivation for medical and industrial purposes, aligning with the global momentum embracing the multifaceted benefits of cannabis.

This ground-breaking decision, made on December 14, 2023, grants the Interior Minister the authority to issue licenses, ushering in a transformative era in Ghana's cannabis regulations.

Ghana's commitment to realizing cannabis's potential was underscored by the passage of the Narcotics Control Commission Act 2020 (Act 1019).

This move aligns with a global wave of countries harnessing the potential of the cannabis industry, which was estimated to be worth 30 billion dollars in

global GDP in January 2022.

Licensing cover the entire spectrum of cannabis-related activities, including cultivation, processing, distribution, sale, import, and export.

Critically, these licenses adhere to stringent THC content standards, limiting levels to 0.3% on a dry weight basis.

Experts claim that if the cannabis industry is properly managed and regulated along the value chain, Ghana's economic issues may be remedied because cannabis has the capacity to flourish in every part of the country.

Key sector expected to benefit significantly is the employment sector.

As Ghana embarks on this transformative journey, the country stands at the forefront of cannabis industry development in Africa.

WHO workshop curbs health technology assessment challenges in African countries

By Special Correspondent

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has organized a 'historical' workshop on Health Technology Assessment (HTA), for selected member states in the African region.

Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia recently, with the theme 'Health Technology Assessment for Priority Setting to Achieve Universal Health Coverage,' the workshop aimed at tackling critical issues related to the systematic evaluation of

healthcare technology and its role in decision-making processes.

The workshop also envisaged helping the establishment and institutionalization of HTA in the health systems of the selected countries, sharing experiences and approaches for capacity building, disseminating relevant guidance documents to promote the use of HTA, and ultimately helping countries to develop their roadmaps for progressing towards implementation of HTA concepts and

principles.

The workshop emphasized that Health Technology, including medicines, medical devices, vaccines, and health interventions, plays a crucial role in health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care.

The essential role of HTA in evaluating the properties, effects, and impacts of healthcare technology to inform policy decisions was also deliberated. The workshop also discussed the vi-

tal role of HTA in achieving UHC by ensuring the efficient and equitable allocation of healthcare resources.

"The main purpose of HTA is to inform policy decision-making in health care, and thus improve the uptake of cost-effective new technologies and prevent the uptake of technologies that are of doubtful value for the health system," Dr. Nonhlanhla Dlamini, Acting Representative of WHO Ethiopia stated while opening the workshop.

The World Health Assem-

bly Resolution WHA67.23 on HTA in Support of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) urges member states to consider establishing national health technology assessment systems, encouraging the systematic utilization of independent health intervention and technology assessment in support of UHC to inform policy decisions.

A multidisciplinary approach is involved in HTA to generate evidence for prioritizing, selecting, introducing, distributing, and managing health technology.

Challenges identified during the workshop include limited use of evidence in policymaking, low awareness, insufficient local institutions with HTA capacity, limited technical expertise, and a lack of local data and appropriate tools.

HTA has been adopted as a means of priority setting across high-income countries—UK, Australia, and Canada) and upper-middle-income countries—Thailand, Brazil, and Mexico), while other emerging economies such as India and China are

establishing their national institutions

However, "low and middle-income countries, especially African nations, with limited healthcare budgets, are struggling to prioritize healthcare needs and allocate their investments effectively," Dr. Dlamini said adding "As per the requests from countries WHO is supporting and providing guidance and support for structures and systems to establish HTA processes and policy frameworks".

"WHO Ethiopia is also

supporting the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia and its agencies in developing the HTA Institutionalizing Road map, defining essential health service package, updating national lists of essential medicines and medicines for health insurance, and strengthening medical product regulatory system," the Representative said and reiterated that the country office will continue supporting Ethiopia in implementing HTA in priority setting for public health.

Ratify ILO C189, domestic workers appeal to the govt

By Getrude Mbago

DOMESTIC workers have urged the government to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s convention number 189 in order to help improve working conditions for the group for sustainable development.

The ILO had adopted its convention number 189 in June 2011, which is the first time the rights of domestic workers were recognised and now some countries are also taking efforts to ratify it.

Speaking during a stakeholders meeting in Dar es Salaam at the weekend, Zanini Athuman, national domestic workers chairperson said that asked the government to urgently provide much-needed recognition and legal protections for domestic workers in the country.

She said that domestic workers play a very big and important role in ensuring that families are safe and healthy but for many years, the group is yet to be paid much needed respect.

"Domestic workers do the indispensable work of caring for children, families, and communities, and help many families meet essential household care needs. Unfortunately, many of them often face barriers to decent work such as poor working conditions, low pay, wage theft, exploitation and other violent actions," she said.

Zanini said that ratification of ILO Convention 189 will be an important and welcoming step in protecting the right of all workers to be free from workplace violence and harassment.

She further said that the Convention insists on the right to privacy for domestic workers which include providing the workers with a safe and private room for them to stay as many employers have been putting them in unpleasant places such as kitchens, corridors and seating rooms.

Nasra Selemani, a domestic worker, said the Convention also wants employers to provide domestic workers with an annual paid leave as well as maternity leave as other sector workers.

"Recognizing that domestic workers have a right to decent work, like other workers. Enabling them to enjoy their rights fully. Domestic workers also have the right to maternal leave, this is very important because many of the workers

have been falling into challenges of being chased by their bosses soon after informing them of their pregnancies," she explained.

Wagala Shungu, secretary of the Conservation, Hotels, Domestic and Allied Workers Union (CHODAWU) said ratifying the convention will greatly formalise the domestic workers field making the workers become respected by everyone.

She said that the stakeholders have a great hope that the government will adopt the convention to recognise the rights and contributions of domestic workers as participants in decent work.

"We have met here today as stakeholders to discuss and draft our recommendations on the Convention which we will submit to the government for it to work on for ratification," she said.

She noted that ILO Convention 189 is an important step towards achieving decent working and living conditions, respect for human rights, fundamental rights, and access to social protection for domestic workers.

Article 14 of ILO C189 states that domestic workers should enjoy conditions that are not less favourable than those applicable to workers generally in respect of social security protection, including with respect to maternity.

Wagala said the recognition of domestic work as work legitimizes the claims of domestic workers to dignity in the workplace, respects their labour rights, and renders them visible to authorities tasked with ensuring that labour standards are enforced. ILO statistics indicate that 1 in every 25 women workers worldwide is a domestic worker.

Wagala said the international treaty acknowledges domestic workers as equal to any other wage earners with an acceptable minimum standard for working conditions.

Joyce Maketa, social welfare officer, Dar es Salaam City Council said that many domestic workers are still facing a number of challenges which include harassment from their employers.

"Many employers have been mistreating their workers, this isn't right, we have been receiving a number of cases at our desk and provide needed support to ensure that the workers access their rights," she said.



Tanzania traffic Police Commander Ramadhani Ng'anzi speaks to journalists on the continuation of motor vehicles inspection countrywide at Shule ya Tanga Bus Stand in Songea municipality, Ruvuma Region over the weekend. Photo: Correspondent Gideon Mwakansya

37 people turn up for screening at JKCI

By Guardian Reporter, Siha

THIRTY-SEVEN people out of the 307 people who turned up for screening at Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) in Siha District, Kilimanjaro Region have been diagnosed for heart problems.

JKCI managing director Dr Peter Kisenge has decided to extend the camp for two days to further screening.

Opening the camp, Deputy Minis-

ter for Health Dr Godwin Mollel said he had decided to speak to Dr Kisenge for the extension of the camp from 18 December to 24 December.

Siha District Commissioner Dr Christopher Timbuka said the exercise has helped people in the area as well as those from nearby districts.

"Out of the 307 people who were screened until yesterday evening, 37 people need urgent referrals, and if this service did not exist, it would take patients a long time to reach

JKCI," he said. Director of integrative medicine and cardiologist at the JKCI Dr. Delila Kimambo, said that the institute has set up a camp in Siha District, for the screening of heart diseases for children and adults.

"This is one of the services provided by our institution named 'Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan Tiba Mkoba' means that we follow the citizens where they are to conduct heart tests, increase the knowledge of doctors who come from the relevant ar-

reas, but also provide the opportunity to detect heart problems for people who would not have the opportunity to come to our institution," she said.

She added that during the camp, leading diseases were blood pressure, coronary artery, rib and heart problems in children.

"The 37 patients diagnosed with heart diseases need further examination and the patients will follow procedures and be referred to the institute for further care."



Mbanga District Commissioner Aziza Mangosongo (C) launches the National ID issuance exercises in the district. The event was held last Thursday. Looking on (L) is Mbanga town council executive director Amina Seif and Ibrahim Liduke, NIDA Mbanga senior registration officer. Photo: Guardian Correspondent.

NIDA registration for Mbanga residents reaches 83.2 percent

By Guardian Correspondent, Mbanga

MBINGA district residents who have been registered with the National Identification Authority (NIDA) have reached 83.2 per cent of the set target, the authority has declared.

Speaking over the weekend during the launch of a 14-day ID card issuance exercise for Mbanga district, NIDA Senior Registration Officer-Mbanga, Ibrahim Liduke, said that until November 30, 2023, a number of the registered stood at 185,986.

"This is equivalent to 83.2 percent

of the target of registering 223, 657 people," said Liduke at an event that was graced by the Mbanga District Commissioner, Aziza Mangosongo.

He said they were planning to withdraw in a short period of time, issue to Mbanga residents 131,181 IDs which were produced in the recent past.

This, he asserted, will make a total number of citizens with National ID cards to 164,275, which is equivalent to 88.3 percent of those who have been registered with NIDA.

For her part, the Mbanga District Commissioner, Aziza, directed Ward

Executive Officers (WEOs) to do all in their power, in efforts to ensure that all Mbanga dwellers are registered with NIDA and have their ID cards.

"The issuance of ID cards will quench the citizens' long-time thirst," said Aziza.

Mbanga Urban lawmaker Jonas Mbunda poured praises on the sixth phase government under President Samia Suluhu Hassan for putting in place conducive policies that set a stage for all citizens to have National ID cards.

"We thank the government under President Samia Suluhu Hassan for

dispensing some 42 billion/- for production of 14 million ID cards," underscored Mbunda.

The meeting was also attended by the Mbanga Town Council director, Amina Seif.

NIDA has issued a 14-day ultimatum for people to collect their IDs from local government offices, villages or hamlets in the areas where they reside.

Going by the authority, failure to do so, within a given period of time will compel them to walk to district offices in their respective regions to get the IDs.

TAEC penalises 12 healthcare centres in Dar for irregularities

By Correspondent Valentine Ofora

THE Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission (TAEC) has embarked on a countywide special crackdown for the inspection of safe use of radiation at health facilities.

The timely exercise which commenced in Ilala District, Dar es Salaam is part to fulfil requirements set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure for safety use of radiations in all sectors that use sources of nuclear energy.

During the impromptu inspection which covered a total of 66 health centres in the Dar es Salaam at least 12 were found to have been operating against the set laws and procedures over the safe use of radiation in providing health services to the public.

In reaction against the shortage, the Commission, TAEC, has so far mete out diverse legal measures against the defaulters in question with an eye to protect the public from the possible dangerous effects of radiation.

Speaking TAEC's radiation specialist Peter Mamma said that the purpose of the exercise was to ensure that the use of radiation in the country is safe in order to protect patients, workers, citizens and the environment in general.

However, he said the commission has far been satisfied with the manner to which huge number of the health centers I'm within Ilala district, at least 54 centres, are handling their radiation services as per safety regulations and standards.

Being an active member of the In-

ternational Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Tanzania is implementing a number of protocols aimed at ensuring safe use of radiation in all sectors that use any sources from the nuclear sector.

Recently, top experts in the nuclear sector within the continent convened in Arusha region to brainstorm over ver occupational radiation protection within their countries.

During the five-day forum, the experts raised concern over an exponential decrease in the number of needed equipment that must necessary be used by the workers associated in diverse sectors that nuclear radiation sources.

Held under the theme of 'RAF 9068 Enhancing Occupational Radiation Protection in IAEA member states' the five-day professional meeting involves countries which are members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which include the host Tanzania.

Felix Omonya Wanjala, the programme management officer, Division of Africa, Department of Technical Cooperation at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) highlighted over the need for improved efforts to promote safety of workers within nuclear technology sector.

He emphasized that more efforts and interventions must be dedicated to heighten quality of work, and working safety in the sectors that use radiation sources, including hospitals, industries, agriculture, to mention but a few.

COP28: 'Climate justice needs language justice,' OIF administrator

By Special Correspondent

FRENCH-speaking countries in Africa face two injustices in climate negotiation bodies. On the one hand, they are on the continent that is most vulnerable to climate change while producing the lowest proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions (less than 4 percent).

On the other hand, climate finance bodies are largely dominated by English speakers, placing the francophone countries at a linguistic disadvantage in their national efforts to mobilize.

This observation was one of the findings shared during a high-level consultation of ministers from French-speaking countries on the issues around mobilising climate funding, organised by the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) on 9 December 2023, alongside the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28).

The consultation on "the French language supporting increased access to climate finance" gave ministers and heads of delegations an opportunity to identify solutions that would give the French language a greater role in climate negotiations and give French-speaking developing countries better access to climate finance.

The participants in this high-level consultation of French-speaking countries in Dubai made a number of recommendations.

"Climate justice needs language justice!" stated OIF administrator Caroline Saint-Hilaire. "We need to send a strong message to our heads of state as well as to our ministers and representatives, to start speaking in French rather than English in the different climate negotiation bodies."

Various speakers also insisted on the

necessity for French-speaking countries to work strategically. This means learning from one other and emphasizing the solidarity among those that are successful in mobilizing funding and those that are not. This same solidarity needs to extend to the sponsors of green projects as they try to achieve an acceptable level of access to climate finance for French-speaking countries.

Participants also shared a proposal to instigate and strengthen high-level advocacy aimed at French-speaking heads of state for easier access to climate finance, looking ahead to the next Paris Summit on climate finance for developing countries.

Arona Soumare, the African Development Bank's focal point for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), emphasized that nine of the world's ten countries most vulnerable to climate change are in sub-Saharan Africa, of which five are French speaking. Hence the necessity of covering the language gap to allow them to access more resources. "Most climate funding requires a long, complex application process, which is only available in English. That creates problems for countries with limited capacity, especially the least developed French-speaking countries in Africa. It is therefore important to advocate so that French-speaking countries can submit projects in their own language to all funding windows of institutions such as the Green Climate Fund," emphasized Mr Soumare. He also referred to the Climate Action Window, which was launched successfully at COP28 on 4 December 2023, to speed up adaptation actions to support the 37 least-developed countries in Africa, of which 18 are French-speaking.



Petty businessman displays his merchandise at Igoma open market in Mwanza Region waiting for would be customers. Photo: Correspondent Neeman Emmanuel.

New project to bolster high-quality industrial progress

BEIJING

CHINA has unveiled a new program to boost the high-quality development of its sprawling manufacturing sector, as the country aims to climb up the global value chain.

According to the project, introduced by three ministries, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China aims to significantly bolster the quality of manufacturing as part of a broader push to accelerate its new industrialization drive.

As China's economy shifts from high-speed growth to a stage of high-

quality development, the MIIT said implementing the project, which will improve manufacturing quality, is urgently required for the country to fill gaps in industrial chains, cultivate new competitive advantages, and move toward the high end of the value chain. The project aims to increase the proportion of middle- to high-end manufacturing products, improve the awareness of product quality among enterprises and advance the digital quality management level of companies by 2025.

The project also proposes to use engineering skills and standardized methods to evaluate the quality man-

agement capability level of enterprises, fully considering the actual situation of enterprises in different industries, technical conditions and quality foundations.

The move comes following China's ranking as the world's largest manufacturing country for a 13th consecutive year in 2022, when its manufacturing output accounted for nearly 30 percent of the world's total, according to the MIIT.

More than 570 Chinese industrial companies have made it to the global top 2,500 companies in terms of research and development investment, boosting their ability to support sup-

ply chains, the ministry said.

China, however, faces bottlenecks in crucial technologies, such as semiconductors and fundamental software, and more efforts are needed to move toward greener, smarter and higher-end manufacturing, experts said.

Huang Qunhui, head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Economics, said manufacturing is a field with the most innovation activity, and more efforts are needed to hone China's industrial prowess in foundational materials, manufacturing processes, software and other areas.



Ally Haruna a tailor in Maswa District makes school uniforms for students. Photo: Correspondent Alex Sayi

Egypt offers training programme for 18 African countries on investment promotion mechanisms

CAIRO

THE General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI), in collaboration with the Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented Egypt in offering a training program for administrative personnel from investment agencies and authorities in 18 African countries.

The training programme, titled "Promotion of Investment Projects," lasted for 5 days and aimed to teach African personnel how to promote and attract foreign direct investment. It covered the creation and operation of investment opportunity maps, automation of investment procedures, and improvement of the efficiency of investor service centers.

The Central Training Academy of the Authority hosted several training programmes for African and Arab

personnel working in the field of investment. The goal is to show them the Egyptian experience in attracting investment, considering it a key factor for foreign direct investment flows in the African continent.

This initiative is in line with the investment agreements and memoranda of understanding that the Authority signed with African countries, aiming to develop African capabilities that can create an investment-friendly environment and increase investment partnerships between Egypt and the rest of the continent.

The training programme had representatives from the Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Conakry, Comoros, Somalia, Mauritania, Liberia, Kenya, Ghana, Gabon, Namibia, Senegal, Mozambique, and Chad.

15 children out of 190 from poor households in Kinondoni emerge winners of third Toy contest

By Beatrice Philemon

FIFTEEN children out of 190 from poor households in Kunduchi ward, Kinondoni District in Dar es Salaam have emerged winners of the 3rd Toy Contest where they walked away with certificates and different prizes.

Aron Group Tanzania Limited chief executive officer Taegyun Kim said yesterday that the contest was designed to develop an attitude for Tanzanian children to recognize the seriousness of the climate crisis and thus be able to practice carbon neutrality in their lives for a sustainable life.

He named winners of the competition as Glory Anania who walked away

with butterfly award and certificate, Mohammad Hamish receive (Geunhye Award, Zuma Hashani and Bias Benas received a Love Award), Nasra Hashan went away with Himang Award and certificate.

Others are Paulo Frans received a Amen Award, Daniel Frank received a Tanzanite Award, Elias Kenneth Love Award, Amiri Arubu received a Glee Award, Joseph Charles went away with Believe Award, Bryan Vaziri receive Angel Award Jacklyn Kedo received Belight Awar), Baraka Frank walking away with Happiness Award), Rahma Hasard received a Toy Story Award), and Hashani Hamish went away with Javi Award and certificate.

The contest was organised by Tanzania Toy Competition Preparation Committee Chairman Kim Tae-Kyun, Jonghyun Lee, Youth Collaboration Team (Team Umefurahi) represented by Park Hye-Ju), Arts Sharing Foundation of Children (Chairman Kim Yoon-Seop). The event was sponsored by the Korean Association of Tanzania in collaboration with the Tanzania Branch of the Dail Community and took place at the Dail Community of Tanzania located in Kunduchi ward in Kinondoni District recently.

He said they have decided to organize the event to give children an opportunity to showcase their creativity in terms of different toys, express their

ideas and have fun.

"The organizers planned to allow children to participate by applying the concept of "up-cycling," which adds their own design to recreate them as objects of new value, beyond simply recycling discarded products," he said.

This toy contest was followed by the first recreation (balloon art, face painting, color study soap bubble play) and the second recreation (stop as it is, blow the balloon loudly) and the toy contest screening.

According to her, local staff belonging to the Dail community and volunteers living in Dar es Salaam Region Kim Dae-Dong Kim Joo-Hoe, Kim Ha-Eun, Park Joo-Ae, Yoo Kyung-Hwa, and

Lee Ju-eun) attended the event.

Kim Ha-Eun, a young Korean Volunteer said "I thought that the purpose of holding a contest to make toys and giving products accordingly would be the basis for children to have a sense of accomplishment and live an independent life," he said.

Yoo Kyung-Hwa, a youth volunteer, said, "I was surprised by the children's brilliant creativity and dexterity and thought Tanzania's future was bright."

Meanwhile, Team Umefurahi, a youth community that co-hosted and organized the competition, was composed of young people who wanted to convey happiness to children.

"Umefurahi means "Are you happy?"

in Swahili and they claim to be the "happiness delivery man" who presents happiness to children in Kunduchi and everyone who participated. Kang Byung-wook, Park Hye-Joo, Elizabeth, Yoo Hye-Jin, Lee Hyun-Jin, Im Da-seul and Choi Da-sol participated in Umefurahi.

The Art Sharing Foundation under chairman Kim Yun-seop, carries out various activities such as supporting various art sharing content and cultural experience opportunities in order to support the emotional stability and self-esteem of future generations at home and abroad and their future vision through art. It is an art sharing foundation.

Digital portals portray what major public agencies want people to see

HEADWAY is being made in widening the use of electronic devices in accessing government services, and increasingly as well, in monitoring how those services are delivered. In an update, we hear that a total of 109 public institutions have now been connected to the 'Government Enterprises Service Bus' (GovESB), a digital portal for enabling inter-operability of institutions' e-communication systems. They need to read each other, exchange information.

Senior e-Government operators believe that the new digital system will fast-track, improve service delivery in all directions, a handiwork of the E-Government Authority, mandated to operate infrastructure for IT systems in the government to communicate. The new infrastructure is described as a clouds-connected system, designed to enable public institutions to seamlessly exchange information, potentially reducing the duplication of information systems in public institutions. This entails more than a wider central system; it needs will.

There is no real doubt that the new mechanism will increase operational efficiency, reduce operating costs, saving time on accessing information. The issue however comes up as to the quality of information that will be uploaded, given the paucity of information on websites of government agencies, and there is no indication that e-GA is demanding a substantial improvement in that regard. Not surprisingly agencies with plenty of public relations information are more noted as having joined to the system, specifically the National Identification Authority (NIDA), the Business Licensing Agency (BRELA), the National Examinations Council (NECTA), the Prevention and

Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) and the National Prosecution Services (NPS).

There was also a general reference to judiciary and the police force having linked up, while the e-GA leadership says that judicial proceedings will be transparent, enabling equitable provision of justice. Evidently in due course public institutions across the country will be connected to the general portal, uplifting somewhat performance of various entities in the government. As with the mobile phone and search engines, there is no doubt that all this will have an impact in service delivery, while many will discover how to gain from it, too.

Some aspects of it show that electronic communication system is not all there is need to elevate efficiency, curb graft in public service delivery. That efforts have been made to curtail longstanding challenges haunting IT systems in public institutions goes without saying, and to an extent it will alleviate troubles of those who seek routine information at inquiry desks for ministries. It is not clear how much else will be visible, thus e-Govt helps beginners seeking information.

For those who seek more than information, they are likely to be frustrated by what they can get there, as chances are that what is noticed in websites is what will be accessible in the wider portal. That is already plenty of work, but it will not by itself shake departments and agencies into more probity or efficiency. What shall push them into that direction is more competition, and greater ability for sale or liquidation for public firms that fail to deliver. For the whole of this ending year the signals there are mixed, where replenishing their capital goes in tandem with merging and deregistration. Not much of that will be on the portal.

Christmas merrier this year as incomes grow, cars numerous

CHRISTMAS is likely to be a happy occasion for more families this year than previous years, though it is on an upward climb each year. Notwithstanding that there will be those at the bottom who lost nearly everything during the course of this year, outward signs in the streets of Dar es Salaam indicate that things are fairly good at the moment. With the building of flyovers in the past half-decade it was becoming ordinary not to see vehicle congestions on the roads except at peak hours, but it now appears the 'peaking' is getting denser and a bit longer.

The last two mid-year estimates of public revenues and expenditure have included some significant raises for civil servants, which easily translates into more people being able to purchase personalised transport. There are related investments of those who have more substantial amounts to put to use, in the construction of shop frames and new business buildings in the commercial capital and elsewhere. Here the source of funds is less the local dynamics of living wages and emoluments but growth of investible surpluses, real capital.

While it cannot be said to have disappeared at any particular point in the past, the culture of sending Christmas gifts for those who have something to spare, as well as putting up what is needed for a convivial atmosphere, is more visible at present. These things are easy to see as they are visible from the outside, how many tailors' shops are visible in the neighbourhood, or style shops coming up in numerous places, even 'off radar' spots with a busy tarmac road already built.

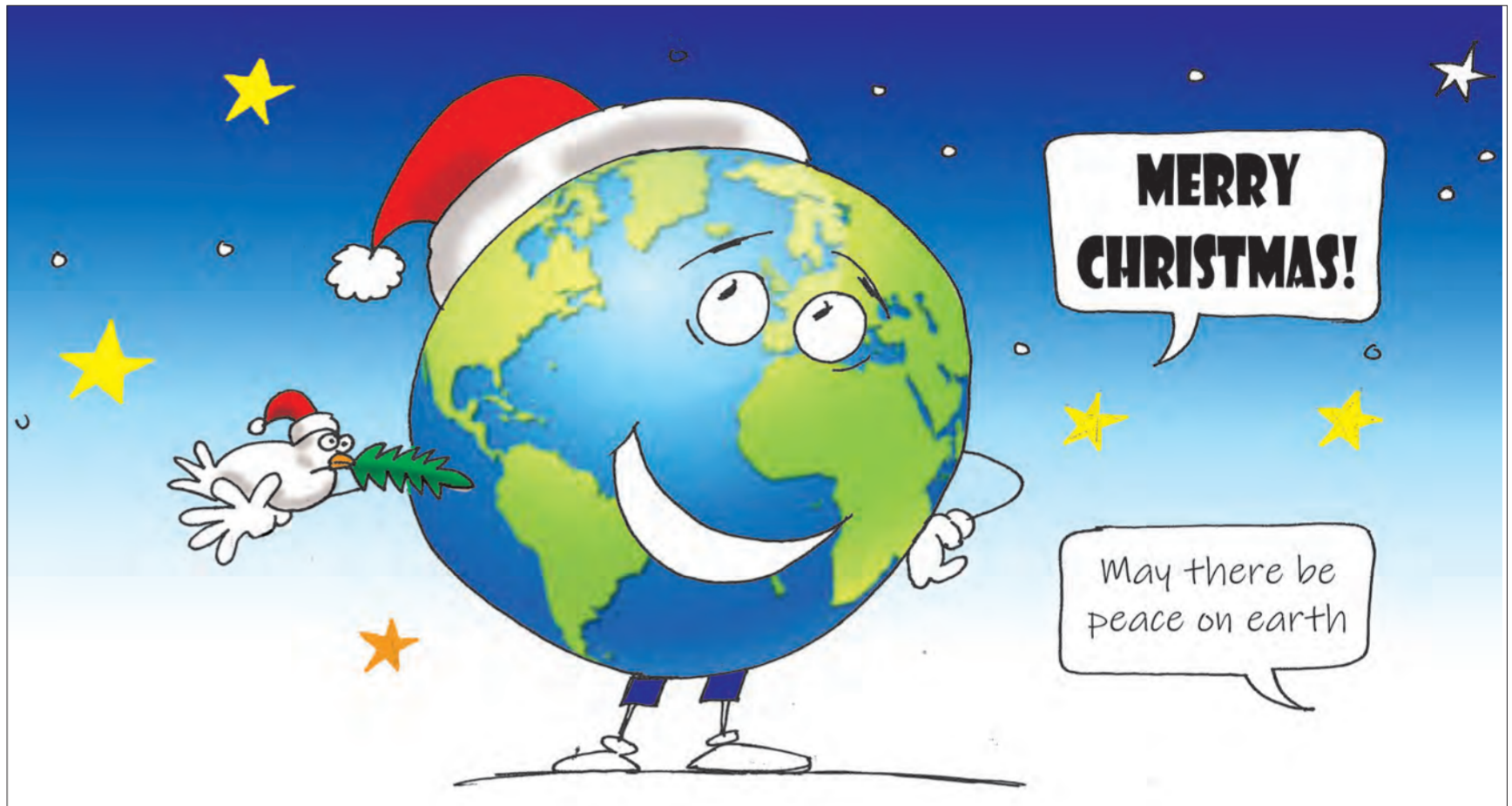
When the offer in the form of shop

frames and glitter shops is so high, chances are similarly high that the take up by customers is high; they target nearly the same clients and it is evident they are evenly distributed in the neighbourhoods.

There are things being said about the country's economy by outsiders at the moment which those who make policy don't seem to have noticed, nor indeed are their local advisers in a position to figure out that same situation. It is the fairly large outlays in public services and infrastructure, where the World Bank says in a report issued this past week that without deeper structural reforms, taking away liabilities from the government's shoulders, the service outlays and infrastructure could soon be burdensome. This point hasn't as yet emerged in policy discussion, for the reason that it has few stakeholders, since the private sector scarcely leads policy discussion except in relation to taxes, not stability.

To underline this incomprehension, upper levels of the Treasury were in a hurry during the run up to the festive season of being willing to scale up salaries of procurement and supply professionals owing to their importance in the country's budget. We heard that their work touches upwards of 97 per cent of the budget, which ought to have meant the development projects part of the budget, which is not an issue. They said lawyers and accountants are paid more, which is perhaps a bit debatable as it depends on the specific employer. The point is that with local level elections and the general elections on the horizon in the next year and the following, efforts to please various sections of the civil service and state economic entities are likely to worsen this exposure; still, there is no crisis yet.

The Guardian Limited Key Contacts	Newsdesk	Advertising
Managing Editor: WALLACE MAUGGO Circulation Manager: DENNIS NTAITA	News Editor: LUSEKELO PHILEMON 0757154767 General line: 0745700710 E-mail: guardian@guardian.co.tz	Mobile: 0677020701 E-mails: advertise@guardian.co.tz Website: www.ippmedia.com epaper.ippmedia.com



An agenda of stability and renewal for Ecowas

By Gbara Awanen

WHEN ECOWAS leaders last convened in a summit in Abuja in July 2023, it was a hastily arranged gathering to craft a response to a military coup in Niger Republic in the wake of a troubling succession of unconstitutional change of government in the region. As the leaders once again meet in Abuja on Sunday, it is plausible the political crisis in Niger Republic would dominate the agenda, but it would be a mistake to treat this issue in isolation.

The overarching challenge remains the democracy recession in the region, which is why the leaders would do well to remain laser-focused on the pressing issue of democracy reversal in the region. Before the Niger coup, military juntas have installed themselves in power in Guinea Conakry, Burkina Faso and Mali. Only last Saturday, an attempted coup was foiled in Sierra Leone, a tragic reminder of the fragility of democracy in the region.

As vexatious as the defiance and antics of the military juntas are, ECOWAS leaders must figure out how to nudge intransigent military juntas in the region from the brink and integrate their countries back into the ECOWAS family. The goal, of course, must remain an early return to constitutional rule in these countries.

In all of this, no one should minimise the enormity of the challenge, but it is a mission the leaders must find the

courage to embrace, not because but in spite of the fragility of democracy in the region. In this task, the leaders themselves must lead the charge, providing capable leadership and governance that deliver jobs and security to their citizens. But an agenda of renewal and hope must also include a dogged commitment to free and fair elections, respect for term limits, human and minority rights - conflict triggers that have often provided facile justifications for military power grabs across the region.

There is yet a creeping geopolitical challenge that ECOWAS must not ignore. In the past few weeks, the military juntas that have constituted themselves into an axis of the disgruntled in our region and have been busy dismantling historical, stable and tested politico-security structures, alliances and partnerships, substituting these with uncertain and improbable new initiatives and coalitions.

Last Saturday, the juntas in Burkina Faso and Niger followed Mali to exit the G5 Sahel Force, an anti-jihadist group that had battled rampaging jihadist forces without much success since 2017, dealing a blow to the fight against sundry terrorist insurgencies in the region. In its place, the angry military juntas have created the Alliance of Sahel States, a mutual defence arrangement apparently hurriedly cobbled together to project strength and resolve and scare ECOWAS into submission.

Also, talks are reportedly underway to create a political confederation linking Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

Nothing wrong here, except that the incipient confederation is a clear repudiation of ECOWAS. According to Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop, the Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger Confederation "will help to consolidate political and economic integration" among the Alliance of Sahel States, a declaration that appears to be a cheeky swipe at ECOWAS.

Apparently fueled by resentment and vengeance against France, a historical partner and benefactor in security and stability operations in the Sahel, the juntas appear to revel in renouncing ties with former Western partners. But it is reckless to thrash stable structures and partnerships in a knee-jerk fashion, not least because these anger-fueled policies could easily unravel and imperil the security and stability of the entire West Africa.

The leaders of the Alliance of Sahel States must be reminded that anger is not a strategy. Choosing to be pawns in the geopolitical competition between the West and Russia is their prerogative, but bad choices in a fragile security environment as the Sahel unfortunately come with grave geopolitical risks.

With the G5 effectively disbanded, France in disfavour and Russia the new sheriff in town in the Sahel, there is an elevated risk of proxy conflicts, upsurge in jihadist violence and sweeping insecurity in the Sahel and beyond. ECOWAS must be concerned.

ECOWAS leaders must also be attentive to the seemingly intractable scourge of terrorism in the region. Fur-

thermore, a good case could be made for the intensification of sanctions but it would suffice to merely retain the existing regime.

Sanctions work, and the purpose is to force a course correction and not to punish. While sanctions take time to achieve their intended objectives, there is ample evidence that the junta in Niamey is feeling the heat, so now is not the time to ease sanctions, as some Nigerians, including the Northern Senators Forum, would want President Bola Tinubu to do.

It bears repeating to stress that subsisting sanctions on Niger Republic were imposed by ECOWAS, not by Nigeria, so our president cannot ease those sanctions unilaterally. Those clamouring for sanctions to be eased need to be reminded that such posturing undermines Nigeria's foreign policy, while also portraying its promoters as unwitting propaganda tools for the defiant military junta in Niamey. Because they represent constituents, legislators instinctively gravitate towards populism, but even so, they must recognize that democracy is at risk in West Africa and every effort must be made to reverse the trend.

Indeed, there is a Northern Senators Forum today only because Nigeria is a thriving democracy. In all of this, it is essential that at the Summit on Sunday and beyond, President Bola Tinubu continues to provide the steady and principled leadership that ECOWAS badly needs in this moment of turmoil and uncertainty.

Readying for an interesting 2024

'May you live in interesting times.' - Ancient Chinese curse.

Congratulations are in order if you're reading this, because it means you've almost made it into the year 2024, what with just a week remaining. What makes this a laudable feat? Well, for starters, 2023 cannot by any stretch of the imagination be tagged a banner year 9 and it's not even over, anyways, for a number of reasons, chief among them the currently-raging economic hardship that has notoriously always-happy Nigerians becoming always-sad. The hardship has affected practically everything to do with life in this country, including lifestyles, social activities, politics, business, education, entertainment, travel, etc. Even in the face of the potentially dampening news of yet another hike of the price of petrol, we soldier on, as humans tend to.

In the midst of the hardship, we saw high-impotent Labour strikes, a good measure in the spike of violent crime in our cities (I'm looking at you, Abuja),

mad rise of prices of everything from food (groceries that one could buy for N30,000 suddenly became N100,000) to medications (Augmentin's infamous rise from N4,000 to N30,000 practically overnight comes to mind) and even transportation (I know someone whose entire N30,000 monthly salary evaporates on taxi fares to work alone). Do not let me start about school fees and rent, either. All I can tell you, without research, is that depression is very much on the rise. Still one on security, we have seen the return - and eventual spike - of kidnappings that often turn deadly. You would also think that as we have gone through the wringer during Buhari's hellish eight years, we would learn our lessons and, as they say, 'take dressing'. But no, we won't, and I can already tell you why: Our national obsession with ethnicity, religion, and the extreme politicization of both, which won't ever let us face, dissect, and solve our biggest problems.

Instead of discussing how to make our country better, we get reductive

about the important things, and choose to fight about Christmas messages from vocal clerics, conspiracy theory-laden 'news' updates about shady politicians, and many other trivialities that do nothing to improve the quality of our lives. But the sad truth is I don't blame us for being the way we are. It stems, quite simply, from the PTSD that comes from just being Nigerian. I mean, where else would an accidental bombing of innocent civilians occur and the Defence Minister would ascribe the deadly gaffe to "God's doing"? Only in Nigeria, of course. I could go on, but the truth is I do not want to inflict more pain than is being felt all around.

Therefore, I believe in 2024, every Nigerian should do their best to engage in fruitful discourse, while remaining sensitive and respectful about the perspective of others, no matter how they may differ from ours. We should study our own history, and that of our neighbours, and how both affect each other. We should judge less, and try to understand each other. We should take time

and educate ourselves about processes that govern us and those who govern us. We should also actively write balanced petitions, call elected officials to order, and even protest if necessary. Peacefully and safely, of course, as we've seen how quickly lawful assemblies spiral down to rabid mobs.

And to our 'leaders' (the inverted commas represent the looseness of the term), apart from growing a conscience and a good heart, try and have a good head. We will come together if you show good example, and take your jobs seriously. You see, Nigerians need to feel like someone is acting on their behalf. You know, leading them? Don't get me wrong: We don't need someone deciding what is in our best interest or not. We need someone who will fight for us, in the best possible way (yes, I'm looking at you, President Bolaji Ahmed Tinubu). I've said this before, and I'll say it again: We need you to be president now more than ever. Step up and do good, or better. Your best can come later.

TMDA's 20 years of exemplary performance in Tanzania, Africa

By Correspondent Devota Mwachang'a

THE Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) marks its 20th anniversary of successful regulation, protection and promotion of public health in ensuring quality and safety as well as diagnostics since its establishment.

In the last 20 years, TMDA has constantly qualified for a clean audit certificate yearly consecutively audited by the office of the Controller Auditor General (CAG) in financial and institutional management.

TMDA which was formerly known as Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA) was established on July 01, 2003 after enactment of the Tanzania Food, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, Cap 219 by the National Assembly.

The authority is designated as center of excellence for registration of medicines in Africa as part of African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) initiative while embracing a broad spectrum of expertise and specialities.

Adam Fimbo, TMDA director general said that the authority is in a unique position to address some of the most challenging and pressing issues in regulatory work in Africa.

"The financial position of the authority has been improved yearly due to collection of fees and charges obtained through services rendered which contribute to 15 percent of our gross income and 70 percent of excess capital as required by the office of the Treasury Registrar," he said.

Fimbo added that TMDA has been certified by International Organization for Standardization - ISO 9001:2015 in systems for regulation of medicines, and is committed to complying with the requirements of ISO and continually improve the effectiveness of its quality management system.

Gaudensia Simwanza, TMDA communication and public education manager said in 2018 the authority was the first national regulatory authority to attain WHO ML Three, then the first of its kind in Africa. This status made Tanzania the first WHO member state in Africa to reach its advanced medicines regulatory system.

She said in 2018 the quality control laboratory complied with WHO Good



Adam Fimbo, TMDA director general addresses the media recently. File photo

Practices for Pharmaceutical Quality Control Laboratories (QCL). It was the first QCL to attain WHO Maturity Level (ML) Four for testing pharmaceutical products in Africa.

"In 2019 the authority has experienced massive changes as from July 02, 2019 in its regulatory functions whereby the control of cosmetics and food products has been shifted to the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) following the Finance Act, 2019 which intuned to the transformation of name from the then Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA) to TMDA," she said.

Dr. Danstan Hipolite, TMDA director of laboratory services told journalists recently that in year 2021, the authority was assigned to regulate tobacco products. Pursuant to Section 28 of the To-

bacco Products (Regulations) Act, Cap 121, the Ministry of Health designated TMDA as the regulatory of tobacco products.

He said the authority conducts analysis of tobacco samples in Central Zone laboratory (Dodoma) whose construction completed in year 2020 and a year later the lab started examining samples of herbal medicines and tobacco products. About 41 samples of cigarettes have been tested since the lab's establishment.

"We have succeeded in testing 18 samples of cigarette products from abroad and 18 manufactured locally," he said.

TMDA also established mobile and patient reporting systems for safe monitoring of medicines in year 2022.

Kissa Mwamwitwa, TMDA director of medical devices and diagnostics control said the authority continually monitors quality, safety and effectiveness through vigilance and post-marketing surveillance activities whereby vigilance centers have been established and effectively used throughout the country.

She explained that in the event of adverse event or incident, quick detection is made and the same is reported through the established Safety and Quality Reporting Tool (SQRT) for prompt remedial regulatory action.

"Among the received reports of adverse event in vaccine, 93 were related to COVID-19 vaccine while 4,752 reports were related to regular vaccines. The information has been collected for

the first phase from Dar es Salaam, Pwani, Dodoma, Tanga, Manyara, Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions," she said.

According to Mwamwitwa, TMDA has a total of 27 centers for monitoring the safety of medicines and medical devices (2006 - Seven centers, 2019 - 20 centers - each region). These centers enable close monitoring of medicine safety (active surveillance) starting from 2009 Artemether Lumefantrine (Coartem) and Dihydroartemisinin Piperaquine, ARVs Covid-19 vaccine.

TMDA continues to conduct inspections to identify and seize fake and counterfeit medicines and medical devices, removing government drugs and medical devices from the market as well as expired medical products. The operation has been carried out in the regions of Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Morogoro, Kigoma, Katavi, Mwanza, Simiyu, Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, Songwe, Lindi and Ruvuma.

Martha Malle, TMDA acting manager for legal services said that in order to control safety of drugs, medical devices and reagents, the authority works in collaboration with the DPP's office, Police, Attorney General, the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman's office, public prosecutors and the judiciary.

"We have lodged a total of 27 cases in various courts across the country. 62 cases have been opened at police stations whereby some cases are at the investigative stage. A total of 89 cases were closed in court and police stations," she said.

Currently, TMDA has registered 7,271 drugs and disinfectants (6,417 human, 638 livestock and 216 disinfectants), registering and identifying medical devices and reagents - 2185/3,636, registering 18 local factories of medicines & medical devices, medical gases and reagents, and to identify hospitals that produce drip water.

TMDA has contributed towards a National Strategy for Development of Pharmaceutical Industry in Tanzania, Sept - 2020 by increasing medical devices and reagents factories in the country to a total of 54 industries including large, medium and small medical devices and reagents factories in the country (52 Medical Devices, two of Reagents) and gas plants 25.

Medical devices included syringes, prosthetic legs, X-ray machines, condoms, gloves and others. While the reagents included AIDS tests, diabetes tests and pregnancy tests.

Emmanuel Alphonse, acting director of human and veterinary medicines at TMDA said:

"The demand of medical equipment in health centers in the country is high. The medical devices that are in great demand are condoms, glasses, blood pressure measuring machines and reagents for measuring diabetes and pregnancy, including reagents for testing malaria, AIDS, suture materials, syringes, radiation machines and others."

Tanzania shows improvement in the Rule of Law Index 2023

By Telesphor Magobe

EACH year the World Justice Project (WJP) publishes a report on the rule of law through which surveyed countries and jurisdictions across the world are measured against eight factors which capture the concept and practice of the rule of law. The performance of each country and jurisdiction serves as an indicator in which factors a particular country and jurisdiction has done well and in which factors it still needs improvement compared to previous rankings.

In this year's ranking Tanzania has made improvement in the rule of law, compared to previous rankings. Even in last year's ranking, Tanzania showed improvement compared to the 2020's ranking. Based on this report, in two consecutive years Tanzania has moved up four positions in global rankings. But it appears to remain in the same position in both last year and this year's sub-Saharan Africa (regional) rankings, each of which shows Tanzania has moved up two positions.

In this year's global ranking Tanzania is the 98th of the 142 surveyed countries and jurisdictions across the world, while last year it ranked the 98th of the 140 surveyed countries and jurisdictions. In sub-Saharan Africa (regional ranking) Tanzania ranks the 12th of the 34 surveyed countries and jurisdictions and in East Africa it ranks the 2nd after Rwanda which ranks the 1st.

In this year's regional ranking, the best three performers are Rwanda (1st), Namibia (2nd) and Mauritius (3rd), while the last three are Mauritania (32nd), Cameroon (33rd) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (34th).

Last year, Tanzania also ranked the 12th of the 34 surveyed sub-Saharan African countries and jurisdictions and in East Africa it also ranked the 2nd after Rwanda which ranked the 1st. Last year's best three regional performers were Rwanda (1st), Mauritius (2nd) and Namibia (3rd) and the last three regional performers were Mauritania (32nd), Cameroon (33rd) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (34th). Burundi and South Sudan do not appear in these rankings.

Among the lower-middle income economies Tanzania ranks the 15th of the 37 surveyed countries and jurisdictions. Each country and jurisdiction was ranked in eight factors, namely constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice and criminal justice.

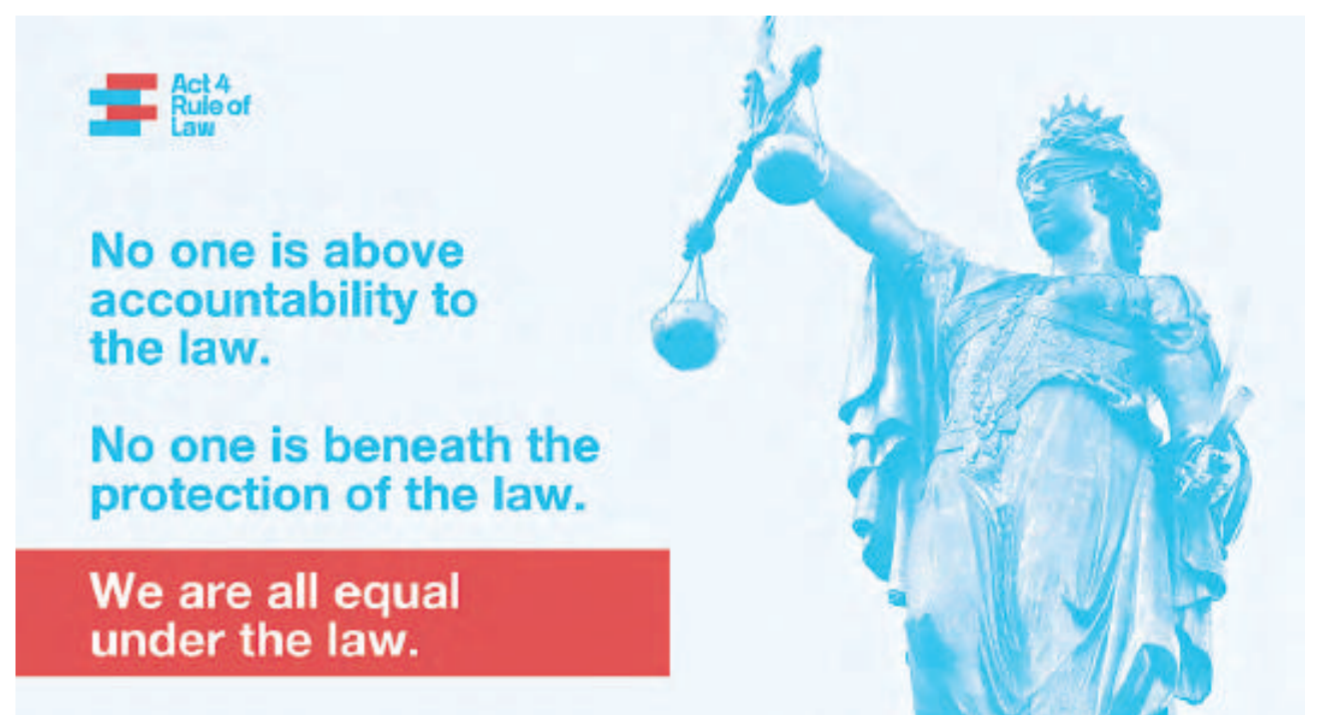
The constraints on government powers factor, which in this report measures the extent to which those who govern are bound by law, Tanzania ranks the 79th of 142 surveyed countries and jurisdictions. "Constraints on government powers comprise the means, both constitutional and institutional, by which the powers of the government and its officials and agents are

limited and held accountable under the law. It also includes nongovernmental checks on the government's power, such as a free and independent press," the report says.

In absence of corruption, Tanzania ranks the 93rd of the surveyed countries and jurisdictions, in open government (113th), in fundamental rights (112th), in order and security (83rd), in regulatory enforcement (101st), in civil justice (90th) and in criminal justice (94th).

The WJP report says open government is a factor which measures the openness of government defined by the extent to which the government shares information, empowers people with tools to hold the government accountable and fosters public participation in public policy deliberations. "This factor measures whether basic laws and information on legal rights are publicised and evaluates the quality of information published by the government."

The fundamental rights factor recognises that a system of positive law that fails to respect core human rights established under international law "does not deserve to be called a rule of law system." Given the fact that there are many other indices that address human rights and because it would be impossible for the WJP report to assess adherence to all rights, "this factor focuses on those rights established under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are most closely related to rule of law concerns," the report says.



The WJP report says the civil justice factor measures whether ordinary people can resolve their grievances peacefully and effectively through a civil justice system. It measures whether civil justice systems are accessible and affordable as well as free of discrimination, corruption and improper influence by public officials. It examines whether court proceedings are conducted without unreasonable delays and whether decisions are enforced effectively. It also measures the accessibility, impartiality and effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

The criminal justice factor evaluates the country's criminal justice system. According to the WJP report, an effective criminal justice system is a key aspect of the rule of law, as it constitutes the conventional mechanism to redress grievances and bring action against indi-

viduals for offences against society. "An assessment of the delivery of criminal justice should take into consideration the entire system, including the police, lawyers, prosecutors, judges and prison officers," the report says.

The WJP Rule of Law Index 2023 says over 6 billion people across the world live in countries where the rule of law is declining. "Amid widespread institutional stagnation, a majority of countries continue to experience rule of law backsliding characterised by executive overreach, diminished human rights, and justice systems that are failing to meet people's needs," WJP Chief Researcher Officer, Dr Alejandro Ponce, says. In this regard, Dr Ponce suggests that there is still much work to be done to advance the rule of law worldwide and to prevent the arbitrary exercise of power.

The WJP defines the rule of law

as "a durable system of laws, institutions, norms and community commitment that delivers accountability, just law, open government, accessible and impartial justice." In light of this, accountability means government and private actors are accountable under the law.

Just law means that the law is clear, publicised and stable and is applied evenly and ensures human rights as well as property, contract and procedural rights are protected. Open government means that processes through which the law is adopted, administered, adjudicated and enforced are accessible, fair and efficient. Impartial justice means that justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical and independent representatives who are accessible, have adequate resources and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.

What's in store for Indian farmers after COP 28 conclusion in Dubai?



By Umar Manzoor Shah

DURGA Das, a 59-year-old farmer from the Indian state of Maharashtra, committed suicide last year by ingesting a poisonous substance. He was unable to repay the loan he had taken from the bank for the renovation of his single-story house.

This year, his 32-year-old son, Pradeep Das, a father of two children, is equally desperate. The family owns half an acre of cultivated land where they grow cotton. The harvest has been devastated due to intense heat waves, leaving farmers like Das and his son Pradeep in dire straits. The loan the family had taken is yet to be paid, and the land they had mortgaged in the bank is about to be confiscated. This means no crops, no cultivation, no business, and no food.

"I would have ended my life long ago, but my kids," sighs Pradeep.

This family is not alone in such a predicament. About 10,000 farmers in India commit suicide every year. This means 27 every day and about one every hour. Suicides in agricultural communities have been a long-standing issue in the country since the 1970s as farmers face an increasing debt crisis.

"Every day, we are inching closer to death. The summers are getting hotter, extremely hot, and there are no rains. We were hoping to repay the bank the entire amount. Our house was in dire need of repair. The monsoon rain penetrated our home and made us all ill—my kids as well as my mother. We decided to repair it and took out a loan against the land we have. But heaven had something else in store for us," Pradeep told IPS, explaining the recent uncertain weather patterns.

Based on statistical modeling, researchers predict that if there was a 25 percent deficit in rainfall, the number of farmers dying by suicide in a year would increase to 1,188 individuals; 2023 is already confirmed to emerge as the hottest year ever. Several months this year set new temperature records. More than 80 days this year happened to be at least 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times. "Climate change is making agriculture an extremely risky, potentially dangerous, and loss-making endeavor for farmers, and it's increasing their risk of suicide," said Ritu Bharadwaj, a principal researcher at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), which conducted the research.

COP 28

From November 29 to December 13 this year, world leaders, climate experts, scientists, and policymakers hailing from 200 countries congregated in Dubai to discuss, debate, and negotiate over the measures needed to be taken to bring down global temperatures and

Food and Agriculture for Climate Justice action by Climate Action Network International at COP28 Credit: COP28/Neville Hopwood



A lone anti-fossil fuel protestor at COP28. Credit: Umar Manzoor Shah/IPS

make the earth fit for human habitation.

Despite being the world's most populous country, India is also anticipated to be the largest contributor to the increased demand for fossil fuels in the next decade. While affluent nations have reduced their emissions by approximately 16 percent since 2007, and China is expected to reach peak emissions before 2030, India's emissions are poised to surpass those of the European Union. By 2030, India's emissions are projected to exceed the combined pollution levels of Europe and Japan.

The COP28 climate meeting delivered some important outcomes—a first-time acknowledgment of the need to move away from fossil fuels, a first promise to reduce methane emissions, operationalization and capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, and an agreement on a framework for the global adaptation goals.

However, like all previous COPs, it remained an underachiever, unable to measure up to expectations, particularly in galvanizing more ambitious climate action in the immediate

term. The main agenda at COP28 was to carry out a Global Stocktake (GST), a comprehensive assessment of where the world was in its fight against climate change and what more needed to be done to meet the climate objectives.

Meanwhile, millions of farmers like Pradeep in India seem to have no hope of any respite in the times to come. With the recently concluded COP preferring to play a proverbial ostrich in terms of taking a final call on fossil fuel reduction—the prime culprit for the global heat wave—there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel for India's crisis-torn farming community. This means more heat waves, a surge in temperatures, and the late arrival of monsoons.

"We could plant good seeds, use quality fertilizer, and make the best human efforts for a profitable harvest, but it is weather that always plays a spoilsport. We cannot escape from its wrath. A farmer would toil for the entire year, and just one single heat wave is enough to dash all his hopes. This is it," Pradeep said.

Will the loss and damage fund help farmers like Pradeep?

The COP28 climate conference in Dubai marked the official launch of a Loss and Damage Fund designed to assist vulnerable countries in dealing with the consequences of climate change. The initial funding for this initiative is approximately USD 475 million, with the UAE committing USD 100 million, the European Union pledging USD 275 million, the US contributing USD 17.5 million, and Japan offering USD 10 million.

The fund itself represents a global financial package aimed at facilitating the rescue and rehabilitation of countries grappling with the cascading impacts of climate change. Specifically, it involves compensation from wealthy nations, responsible for the industrial growth leading to global warming and the climate crisis, to less industrialized nations. These nations, despite having a low carbon footprint, bear the brunt of rising sea levels, floods, severe droughts, intense cyclones, and other climate-related challenges. The evolving climate has profoundly affected lives, livelihoods, biodiversity, cultural traditions, and identities.

Although the Fund was initially in-

troduced during COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, it wasn't until a few weeks before COP28 that rich and poor nations were able to resolve some of their differences and reach agreements on crucial aspects of it.

Highlighting the limitations of the traditional project cycle, Dr Anand Patwardhan, Professor at the University of Maryland, asserts that it is insufficient for addressing the impacts of loss and damage. Emphasizing the importance of recognizing that the ongoing discussion primarily focuses on nations, he underscores the critical need for funds to directly benefit individuals who have undergone loss and damage. He stresses the significance of ensuring access to delivery in this context.

Dr Benito Muller, Managing Director, Oxford Climate Policy, says he doesn't see this as a fund that spends USD 150 billion annually. "It is very difficult to spend this annually. What this fund should do is not only pilot new funding arrangements but also identify new ways of spending the money, for example, the new insurance schemes."

Anita Gosh, a New Delhi-based climate activist, says there seem to be no immediate benefits for Indian farmers, even though the Loss and Damage Fund was announced.

"The farmers should be offered comprehensive insurance policies in case of drought-like situations or massive crop damages. The fund should also provide some financial help to the farming communities if they are in distress, like less harvest, marriage ceremonies, or house repairs. The entire idea should be that we must adopt a humane approach towards this community, which is at the receiving end of climate change," Anita said.

However, she believes the plan for how the fund should be spent is yet to be devised and that she fears it could be shelved for years, as has been the procedure in the past.

"If the past recommendations had been implemented, the situation would have been different today. Now is the time to say enough is enough; we need action on the ground," Anita told IPS News.

Postscript

During the 14-day period when COP-28 was being held in the opulent Dubai, more than 380 farmers are likely to have killed themselves in India—some for failing to repay the loans, some for failing to pay dowry for their daughter's marriage, and some for losing hope of giving a good life to their families. But underneath this crisis lurks the prime reason for all these deaths—climate change and the havoc it has been wrecking upon the poor.

Note: The names of the suicide victim and his family have been changed.

IPS UN Bureau Report

By Getrude Mbago

CISTI project producing positive results in colleges, communities

THE implementation of the Curriculum Implementation Support for Training Institutes (CISTI) project has started to produce positive outcomes in various areas in the country which include stimulating organic farming and agroecology practices.

The project, which its first phase commenced in 2020, has benefited 29 agricultural training institutes in the country. It has facilitated review and approval of six new training modules for agriculture production on certificate and diploma levels which also saw organic farming being added as a course.

The initiative is implemented collaboratively by the government and the Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT).

Dr Sebastian Moshia, principal at the Ministry of Agriculture Training Institute (MATI- Uyole) in Mbeya Region told journalists recently that the project has transformed the mindsets of tutors, students and other staff who currently admire organic farming over the modern one.

"We really thank the execution of this project because it has brought numerous benefits which most of us didn't expect, for many years, our colleges have been investing in teaching general farming which always bless the use of many additional such as industrial fertilisers, boosters and pesticides, the project has reminded us that it is high time to turn into organic farming and this or safe way," he said.

Organic farming, also known as ecological farming or biological farming, is an agricultural system that uses biodegradable fertilisers of organic origin, such as compost manure, green manure, bone meal and places emphasis on techniques such as crop rotation and companion planting.

He said the implementation of the project which includes the first phase commenced in 2020 and the second phase which started in January, this year has greatly supported the college with regular training where a total of 25 tutors have benefited.

"The project has also facilitated review of curriculum to promote



Samwel Amanysisye, a garden attendant at MATI-Uyole shows organically grown tomatoes

sustainable agriculture as well as construction of learning and teaching facilities as screen houses which support horticulture farming," he added.

Samwel Msuya, deputy principal of the college thanked SAT and the government for the big job which has greatly improved teaching practices where now students are fed important skills that are needed in the market and align with the country's needs.

"Through this project, our

project's fields are now more attractive because we are growing a lot of organic products which include fruits and vegetables benefiting the school community and surrounding residents," he asserted.

He urged Tanzanians to embrace organic farming and invest in the area as much as they can due to its numerous benefits and the growing demand of the products locally and in the foreign markets.

Fedi Mhabuka, tutor at MATI-Uyole said: "Through the project, our

youth are now seriously learning the courses which include entrepreneurship to enable them to be innovative and independent after graduating."

He said the review of the curriculum was good and will help bring remarkable changes in the agricultural sector.

Samwel Amanysisye, garden attendant at MATI-Uyole said: "Organic farming pay a lot, a growing demand of naturally produced food products call for more people to

embark in this farming, there is no cost of artificial fertilizers and pesticides, so farming costs a low compared with the normal farming, we encourage Tanzanians to see this opportunity so as to improve their income and stay healthy," he explained.

Project manager from SAT, Kashindy Salum said the project purpose was to support public and private training institutions to produce graduates who are in line with the need of the country through suc-

cessfully integrating and implementing organic agriculture, gender, environmental management, cooperatives and communication skills through the new training curriculum for agriculture on certificate and diploma levels."

He said garden attendants, principals and tutors from 29 Agricultural Training Institutes (ATIs) have been drilled on organic farming so as to facilitate them manage the gardens sustainably and impart the knowledge practically to students.

He noted that organic agriculture has low costs and ensures safety of both farmers and consumers.

He said: "When people embrace organic agriculture, their production process gives them the first round of safety, then the consumer a well. Farmers should embrace organic agriculture so that they can enjoy more harvest, good health as well as conserve the environment."

He further said that SAT, through implementation of various projects, has been instilling organic farming knowledge and skills among the groups of people thus promoting natural and conservation farming which eventually help to improve income and reduce conflicts.

In June last year, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said that the government was working on a plan to invest heavily in promoting organic farming which includes advising farmers on proper use of pesticides so as to increase yields.

He told the Parliament that the strategy was aimed to help the country's agriculture shift to organic farming and get rid of using industrial fertilizers and pesticides for sustainable development.

"The government has witnessed how organic farming is doing well, we have seen it in various crops such as maize, coffee, tea and others. So we are going to ensure that we strengthen organic farming and attract more farmers to take this as their sustainable activity which will transform their incomes and lives for the better," he said.

Iran's export of foodstuffs, agricultural products to Africa up 18 per cent

TEHRAN

THE value of Iran's export of foodstuffs and agricultural products to Africa rose 18 per cent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), the director-general of the Market Study and Development Department of Rural Cooperative Organization announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that Iran exported 41,000 tonnes of such products worth \$28 million to the African countries in the mentioned eight-month period, which also indicates 34 per cent growth in weight, year on year.

He said that Iran's foodstuffs and agricultural products were exported directly to 33 African countries in the first eight months of the present year.

Over the past 40 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never given up on its principled policy towards Africa due to political and cultural commonalities, despite the sanctions, pressure and disruptions of the West, and has always maintained itself alongside the people and countries of Africa.

As reported, during the Iranian calendar years 1384 and 1385 (March 2005-March 2007), the relations between Iran and the African continent increased in terms of trade, but since 1386, the economic relations between Iran and Africa have decreased due to the economic crisis and cruel sanctions against Iran.

Surveys show that in the past years, due to the lack of restoration of economic relations with Africa, the amount of trade with

the countries of this continent has remained at the level of \$1.2 billion, but according to Mohammed-Sadeq Qanadzadeh, the director general of the Africa Department of Iran's Trade Promotion Organisation (TPO), facilitating the trade route with Africa is happening now and it is expected that the trade figure with this continent will reach \$10 billion in the next three years.

In fact, good steps have been taken to use Africa's capacity, and Africa can be a suitable market for Iranian goods, Qanadzadeh stated.

Last year, the official referred to the beginning of the 13th government's measures to develop relations with the African continent, and said: "Over the past [Iranian calendar] year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), a series of measures have been initiated, which were resulted in the visit of about 60 African trade delegations, active presence in the exhibitions of this continent, the opening of 10 trade centers, and the dispatch of three commercial attaches.

As the result of these measures, Iran's trade with Africa experienced a 100-percent growth from \$650 million in the Iranian year 1399, and also in the first nine months of the year 1401, Iran-Africa trade was equal to the total trade of the previous year, and we also experienced a growth of about 700 percent in the export of technical and engineering services, he added.

Also as announced by Ruhollah Latifi, the value of trade between Iran and Africa rose two percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

He put Iran-Africa annual trade at

2.545 million tons worth \$1.278 billion.

Iran exported 2.452 million tons of products valued at \$1.183 billion to 49 African countries in the past year, showing one percent fall, and imported 92,898 tons of goods worth \$95.316 million from 23 African countries, indicating 59 per cent growth, year on year, according to Latifi.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari has said that the economies of Iran and the African continent are complementary to each other, and due to their abundant capacities, significant achievements can be achieved in this due.

He made the remarks at the Scientific and Economic Cooperation Meeting Between Iran and West African Countries (IRAN WAC) which was held in Tehran in mid-March.

As reported, 20 multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements were signed between Iran and West African countries in the first day of the mentioned event, and the expansion and deepening of comprehensive economic cooperation was emphasized.

Addressing that meeting, President Raisi emphasised Tehran's readiness to comprehensively expand cooperation with African countries, especially countries in the west of this continent.

He also said that the current level of trade between Iran and Africa is not acceptable, and according to the capacities and efforts of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and West African countries, it is expected that the cooperation and economic relations between



them will change even more.

As stated by the experts, in order to increase the level of trade with Africa certain infrastructure including transportation and direct shipping lines, as well as proper legal, commercial, monetary, and banking relations must be provided.

It is said that in the near future, the African continent will become a great power in the world due to having 18 per cent of the world's population and increasing population growth.

Statistics show that the African continent has 30 percent of mineral reserves, 40 percent of gold, and 90 per cent of chromium and platinum in the world. The continent also has the largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium in the world.

Also, Africa has 65 percent of the world's arable land, 10 percent of renewable fresh water resources, and 12 per cent of the world's oil re-

serves.

As stated by Mehrad Ebad, a member of the board of representatives of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), in the last 20 years, Africa's foreign trade has grown significantly, but Iran has not yet been able to use this capacity.

According to Ebad, one of the issues that caused the African market to be neglected was the lack of proper introduction of this market to Iranian traders and businessmen.

In order to develop trade and relations with African countries, it is suggested the activity of joint chambers of commerce to introduce target markets and existing risks will be increased; Because our exporters are not interested to go to African markets due to lack of knowledge, he commented.

He also considered the cruel sanctions as another problem of trade with Africa and said that the

traders are forced to send their goods to these countries through neighbouring countries such as the UAE, Oman and Turkey in order to export their goods to African countries. It will cause re-export of goods and increase costs.

Despite existence of some barriers in the way of expanding trade between Iran and Africa, the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to three African countries (Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) in mid-July proves that the current government is serious about developing cooperation and communication with the African continent in order to secure the country's economic interests.

Economic experts believe that the president's visit to Africa provided the basis for increasing Iran's presence in the 60-billion-dollar economy of the African continent and will increase the level of activity of Iranian traders and businessmen in this continent.

Jacob Zuma lays down the South Africa election challenge to ANC



Mr Zuma announced that he will not vote for the ANC in Soweto, where the ANC's armed wing was disbanded in 1993

By Daniel De Simone

By announcing he will not vote or campaign for South Africa's governing African National Congress (ANC) in next year's general election, former president Jacob Zuma is seeking to portray himself as its saviour.

This might seem a contradiction in terms, but the strategy appears clear from his words, including the highly personal attack on his successor, President Cyril Ramaphosa. Many South Africans see Mr Zuma as representing what is wrong with the recent past, and with having tainted the ANC by presiding over widespread corruption in government.

He is a highly divisive figure, dismissed by many as sinister and irrelevant but loved by his supporters.

His statement on Saturday highlighted social problems and divisions in South Africa which, for some, have never gone away.

His intervention comes ahead of an election widely seen as the most competitive for the ANC since it first came to power nearly 30 years ago, following the end of the racist system of apartheid.

The ANC was born in opposition to racial injustice and oppression, and still regards itself as a national liberation movement.

But, according to Mr Zuma, the ANC of President Ramaphosa has betrayed its revolutionary heritage. In saying so, he is seeking to appeal to ANC voters unhappy with its record in power.

The personal history between the men is important. In 2014 then President Zuma appointed Mr Ramaphosa as his deputy.

Four years later, amid significant pressure from within the ANC as he was dogged by corruption allegations, he resigned as president and was succeeded by Mr Ramaphosa.

The 81-year-old Mr Zuma, who joined the ANC as a teenager, was an anti-apartheid activist and spent a decade in jail as a political



The new party which Mr Zuma says he will support bears the name of the ANC's former armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe, and uses the same abbreviation, MK.



prisoner. He was part of its armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), or Spear of the Nation.

President Ramaphosa was also an anti-apartheid activist and had key ANC roles during the early 1990s, including being its chief negotiator in talks with the apartheid regime.

But, unlike Mr Zuma, he was not associated with MK and he spent years out of politics from the mid-1990s when he made a fortune as a businessman.

Mr Zuma is casting himself as a true revolutionary, and characterising President Ramaphosa as a sell-out.

The many controversies surrounding Mr Zuma have not receded in the years since he left office, and he is still facing charges of corruption over a 1999 arms deal. He denies the charges.

Some South Africans will regard Mr

Zuma's new intervention as a distraction from these personal challenges.

He was jailed in 2021 for contempt of court after refusing to testify before an inquiry investigating financial sleaze and cronyism under his presidency.

He spent two months in prison before being released on medical grounds. The release was later ruled illegal, but he did not return to prison due to overcrowding in the system.

The new party which Mr Zuma says he will support bears the name of the ANC's former armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe, and uses the same abbreviation, MK.

There is a deep symbolism in adopting it, and in the date and location - 16 December in Soweto - of Mr Zuma's announcement.

This date was the anniversary of MK's

founding in 1961, which was itself the anniversary of a highly contentious event in South African history - the 1838 Battle of Blood River between white settlers and Zulu people in what is now the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The battle's outcome was seen by white Afrikaners as showing divine approval of them and for decades they marked it during apartheid as a public holiday called the Day of the Vow.

After the end of apartheid, the public holiday remained but its name was changed to the Day of Reconciliation, with the aim of encouraging national unity and racial harmony.

Soweto, the location of Mr Zuma's announcement, is where MK was disbanded in a ceremony 30 years ago to the day, on 16 December 1993.

MK's disbandment came ahead of South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, and what was seen as the miraculous birth of a "rainbow nation" under the presidency of anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela.

Mr Zuma now says there can "never be reconciliation without socio-economic justice and equality" and that the new MK party is seeking the "return of our land to its rightful owners, the African people".

By adopting the MK name and with his statements, he is showing he thinks post-apartheid South Africa has not delivered all it should have done for black people.

Mr Zuma spoke of a "new people's war" but said it would involve ballots rather than bullets.

His rhetoric was incendiary. He characterised President Ramaphosa as a "proxy" of "white capitalist interests" and said voting for the ANC will lead to government by "sell-outs and apartheid collaborators".

There will be concern among some that violence and instability could be triggered, depending on how political events play out from now on.

The worst unrest in post-apartheid South Africa, which saw more than 350 people die, took place in 2021 after Mr Zuma was arrested and jailed.

Much of it took place in his home province of KwaZulu-Natal, where he still enjoys significant support.

South Africa faces huge challenges: high levels of unemployment and violent crime, vast inequality and failing infrastructure.

Polls indicate that in next year's elections, the ANC could fall below 50% for the first time since it took power in 1994, raising the prospect of a coalition government.

It will be a challenge for the MK party to quickly build a national campaign network, and it is too early to know where it will stand or how much support it can realistically achieve.

Mr Zuma referred to discussions about the formation of a "patriotic front" and "voting bloc" after the 2024 elections, indicating he sees a need to collaborate with other parties, either to form a government or provide opposition to the ANC.

Mr Zuma said he will "die a member of the ANC", while saying he will campaign for the new MK party.

He did so only hours after the governing party had itself celebrated the anniversary of its disbanded military wing, saying "we hold the collective members of MK in the highest regard, venerating them as the heroines and heroes of our struggle".

The ANC has not formally responded to Mr Zuma's statement, but its secretary general previously said that MK "belongs to the ANC" and it would take legal action to keep ownership of the name.

"If you want to form a party, you can go, but leave MK with us," he said.

The fresh division between Mr Zuma and the ANC of Mr Ramaphosa has injected a bitter dynamic into South Africa's big election year. **BBC**

RADIO One RATIBA YA VIPINDI JUMATATU - JUMAPILI

MONDAY TIME PROGRAMME	TUESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	WEDNESDAY TIME PROGRAMME	THURSDAY TIME PROGRAMME	FRIDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SATURDAY TIME PROGRAMME	SUNDAY TIME PROGRAMME
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BUSINESS

Dodoma's USD3.5 million sugar processing plant in the pipeline

Authority to promote Ethiopia's special coffee at African fine conference

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA is making preparations to promote its special coffee at the 20th African Fine Coffees Conference and Exhibition to be held in Addis Ababa in February 2024, according to the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority.

Ethiopia, one of Africa's leading specialty coffee nations, will host the annual African Fine Coffees Conference under the theme of "Specialty Coffee at Origin" in the first week of February 2024.

Authority Director-General Adugna Debela said yesterday that the conference would bring opportunity to promote the nation's coffee through 'origin trip' to areas where coffee is produced; and there is also a test of harvest to promote Ethiopia's coffee special test.

In addition, the director-general pointed out that there will be panel discussions. The authority is working to glorify Ethiopian coffee through various mechanisms, including using the national brand at the international market, Adugna noted.

The annual conference will bring together around 2,000 regional and international coffee roasters, traders, producers, buyers, and professionals under one roof to discuss policies, sustainability, access to finance, coffee competitions, and other actions, it was learned.

The preparation to host the conference is underway, in collaboration with all pertinent stakeholders. Ethiopian Airlines will provide 20 percent discount for participants coming to Ethiopia.

According to Adugna, the authority has done successful activities through Cup of Excellence Ethiopia, the most prestigious coffee competition and auction held to identify the highest quality coffees produced, in promoting Ethiopian coffee for the past three years.

The director-general further said that the country is also working to protect its property rights in the global coffee market.

With USA, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, and Germany the main export destinations of Ethiopian coffee, the nation has now increased its coffee destinations to 60 countries due to the promotion activities done using various mechanisms.

Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee Arabica and contains nearly fifth of all coffee farms around the world. Founded in July 2000, the African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) is a regional non-profit, non-political, member-driven association representing coffee sectors in 11 member countries.

AFCA members include both private and public sector coffee stakeholders, including producers, exporters, importers, roasters, policy makers, transporters and trade representatives.



U.S. Chargé d'affaires to Ethiopia Peter Vrooman tries his hand as a barista at the 7th Africa Barista Championship & All Star Challenge booth. The booth is sponsored by USAID's East Africa Trade and Investment Hub.

Govt targets more investors in value addition to lure forex, create jobs

By Correspondent Joseph Mwendapole

TANZANIA is currently promoting more on value addition in agri-products to attract more foreign currencies as well as creating job opportunities for youth.

Prof Kitila Mkumbo, Minister of State in President Office, (Planning and Investment) made the remarks over the weekend in Dar es Salaam when speaking to the Board of Tanzania Investment Center (TIC).

"The current trend of exporting raw materials is not healthier to our economy, that's why we're encouraging investor to venture into value addition projects to create jobs to the young population and thereafter bring in more forex," he said.

Prof Mkumbo said that the government's greatest need is to create new jobs for Tanzanians who graduate from various universities in the country so that they can earn an income to enable them to overcome poverty.

"We've many skilled youth who are jobless, so creating jobs is our very important agenda; you must find a way to get there. We must make sure that all goods are processed here-added value and this is one way of creating jobs to our people," said Mkumbo.

According to him, the main goal of the government is to increase exports as a way to increase the national income and added that for the past 20 years the government has been striving to increase exports from less than one billion US dollars up to \$6billion per year.

"It is true that we have increased exports, but the biggest challenge is that we have sold many raw products from mining, agriculture, fishing, so we want to see that these products are added value here, the culture of selling raw materials must be terminated," he said.

Minister Mkumbo said the government ensures that production activities are carried out throughout the country using energy that does not pollute the environment of Tanzania and the world as stated in various resolutions in the world regarding air pollution.

He said Tanzania wants to see the economy become inclusive, that generates many jobs and which increases the sale of goods abroad and which brings prosperity to all citizens instead of benefiting the few.

"We want to see inclusive economy that helps many people to get rid of poverty, because the economy can grow but only help few people. I am telling you this because when you put in place strategies to attract investors, you must know what the government's goals are and then implement them," he said.

"The government needs a new economy that goes in line with the number of its people because if you

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo, Dodoma

CONSTRUCTION work for the first phase of key structures for the maiden sugar factory in Dodoma capital city is set to commence between January and April 2024.

Erection of the USD 3.5 million worth sugar plant in the central zone stalled for some period due to delay in issuance of needed investment documents as well as connection of power at the area where the facility is being installed, in Dabalo ward of Chamwino district.

The electric company is working tirelessly to connect the area with high-voltage electricity so that the picked investor Purandare Industries (T) Ltd is currently working round the clock to ensure the factory takes shape in order to start

production.

Satish Purandare, Managing Director, Purandare Industries (T) Ltd, said that all of the basic sugarcane farming modern equipment and other key inputs have already arrived in Dar es Salaam's port from India for production.

According to him, the equipment includes a sugarcane planting machine and the green harvest fertilizer (organic fertilizer) worth 200m/-.

"We have so far entered into contract farming with a total of 26 local farmers who will be obliged to cultivate a total of 483 hectares of sugarcane in order to produce at least 25,000 tons of sugarcane to enable the plant to produce a total of 2,500 tons of sugar in its first year of production," he expressed.

Farmers under contract farming agreements will separately manage their sugarcane estates in the different villages in Dabalo ward,

including Igamba, Manyanda, Chiwondo and Dabalo.

"Farmers have already received special training from agro sugarcane pundits from India, and will apply the NCO 365 sugarcane variety as recommended by the Sugar Board of Tanzania (SBT)," he added.

He added that, from January to April 2024 the project will see construction of a modern residential complex for sheltering the plant's experts, including houses and a major dining hall, as well as a warehouse.

"Between April and September 2024, we are expecting to import into the country the 5bn/- worth major machines for the processing of sugar in readiness to start production," he said.

Dubbed 'Sukari Halisi (Dabalo Sugar)', the factory will start by producing a total of 2,500 tons of sugar in its first production leg, in

2025, and will later on heighten the production scope to between 4,000 and 5,000 tons.

"The factory's main market shall be Dodoma region in order to provide the increased population at the country's capital city with the necessary food item at patriotic prices, and we will later in the future penetrate to other neighbouring regions," he observed.

Despite the so far impressive development, the investor raised a concern over poor infrastructure to connect the factory with Dodoma city, the poor situation he expressed to have thwarted smooth relocation of the factory's machines from Dar es Salaam to the project's venue.

"For example, most of the machines, and other facilities are still in Dar es Salaam as we have no means to transfer them to the factory's site due road infrastructure complications," he informed, urging the government to help improve the situation.

Purandare commended the government for assisting the Indian investors to chip in and invest largely into the country, as well as the Indian High Commissioner to Tanzania, Binaya Srikanta Pradhan for his patriotic support towards the investment.

"My sincere appreciation goes to Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), Sugar Board of Tanzania (SBT) for assisting me to grow-up to this investment level, but also the Bank of India (Tanzania) and Canara Bank (Tanzania) for their readiness to bankroll this project," he appreciated.

The modern sugar plant to its official inception is expected to permanently employ at least 70 workers, including 15 experts from India and 55 locals who will be trained to handle different key sections professionally.

Halotel rejoices yearend by cleaning local market



We recognize the various challenges faced in local markets areas due to high population of people moving in and moving out, buying and selling all with the goal of earning something at the end of the day.

By Guardian Reporter

HALOTEL Telecommunication Company and its employees, yesterday participated in a cleaning exercise as part of celebrating the end of year holidays.

Clean and Safe Environment acts as a base for promoting a better business location for earning on a regular basis, by identifying this factor, Halotel in cooperation with the office of the local councilor participated in the cleaning exercise at Makumbusho local market supporting the efforts of keeping the city of Dar-es-salaam clean.

The event was attended and supported by Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner Albert Chalamila who said: "I am proudly happy to see various stakeholders

like Halotel supporting the efforts of social welfare in the health sector which is the key to the development of other sectors in the city of Dar es Salaam."

Halotel Director of Business Sector Abdallah Salum said: "In order to ensure that we help the community and support their daily activities, today we have come to clean the Makumbusho local market and provide cleaning equipment that will help to keep Makumbusho Market place in a cleaner state."

"We recognize the various challenges faced in local markets areas due to high population of people moving in and moving out, buying and selling all with the goal of earning something at the end of the day," he said.

"We too Halotel have our employees selling our products around the market,

therefore this act is more of giving back to the community that supports us to thrive, by providing these cleaning equipment such as brooms, rakes and dustbins it will help to reduce carelessness spread and accumulation of waste in the market area."

Among of the local businessmen in the market said: "We feel very happy that Halotel came here and participated with us directly in cleaning not only that but also by providing us with hygiene equipment in our market, this exercise is not a small thing that we do here, but it inspires us to continue taking care of our environment that's in the end will bring comfort to us all."

On the side of Market Leadership, Dama Samora, Kijitonyama councillor said: "We are very relieved that Halotel and its employees

have come here to participate in this hygiene exercise. This is to encourage good health and clean environment for everyone in the country. This is a big step for us in strengthening the best relationship between us as a community and the Halotel Company."

Halotel continues to make great strides in providing communication services and providing high-quality services throughout the country, this company continues to be involved in providing various aids to the Tanzanian community.

"This is to show how it values and cares for the Tanzanian community in various aspects, including improving the health and education sector as one of the priorities of this company for the development of Tanzanians and the country at large."



stay with the same economy you cannot increase the scope of tax collection and the national income cannot increase, so for the national income to increase we need new investments and new taxes," said Prof Mkumbo.

He said the statistics show that many investors prefer to invest in the industrial production sector, ag-

riculture, commercial buildings and transportation and directed TIC to continue attracting investors in various areas.

He asked Tanzanians to continue to take chance in various investment opportunities and to abandon the notion that when the government talks about investment, it is talking about foreigners.

The quarterly information provided by TIC has shown that Tanzanians are increasingly taking chance in investment opportunities and previously when we opened the sale of NMB bonds.

"99 percent of those who bought them are Tanzanians and I congratulate them so we should not think that investment is only for foreigners and we are involved," he said, lauding TIC director general, Gilead Teri for the way he has been leading the centre with great success and registering many projects worth billions of US Dollars every year.

He asked Tanzanians who own land to contact TIC in order to be connected with investors to use their land productively and earn income.

Dr. Binlith Mahenge, TIC board chairman the centre has various strategies to develop investment sector with the aim of raising the national income and increase employment for Tanzanians.

New deposit rate cuts herald cheaper loans

BEIJING

CHINA'S biggest banks cut interest rates on deposits on Friday, which analysts said may have marked the biggest cut since 2016 and will likely help create room for benchmark lending rates to decline early next year.

China's five largest State-owned commercial banks and China Merchants Bank, a major joint-stock commercial bank, reduced deposit rates across the board on Friday, with the interest rate on three-month, six-month, and one-year time deposits down 10 basis points to 1.15 percent, 1.35 percent and 1.45 percent, respectively.

The banks, according to their statements on official websites, also cut the interest rate on two-year time deposits by 20 basis points to 1.65 percent, three-year deposits by 25 basis points to 1.95 percent and five-year deposits by 25 basis points to 2 percent.

The five largest State-owned banks are Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, China Construction Bank and Bank of Communications.

Another major State-owned bank,



A visitor walks past the booth of Bank of China during an expo in Beijing.

Postal Savings Bank of China, was yet to announce the rate cuts as of Friday afternoon but analysts expect it to do so soon, while small and medium-sized banks may fol-

low suit later.

Friday's adjustment was this year's third reduction in deposit rates, following previous cuts in June and September.

A report of China International Capital Corp Ltd highlighted the latest reduction as the most substantial since 2016, featuring an uncommon cut of up to 10 basis points for

both three-month and six-month deposit rates.

While the move will incentivize households to save less and consume more, experts said the most significant aspect of Friday's move is that it eases commercial banks' profitability pressures and serves the policy focus of reducing financing costs of the real economy to bolster economic recovery.

The Central Economic Work Conference held earlier this month has called for efforts to promote a moderate decline in the overall cost of social financing while keeping it generally stable.

Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China, said the reduction in deposit rates is necessary for further easing the real economy's financing costs as banks' net interest margin – the difference between the interest rate banks charge on loans and the rate they pay out to depositors – is already low and leaves limited room for lending rates to decline.

"Commercial banks' profit has decreased amid declining net interest margin, and so has their ability to supplement capital through retained earnings. Banks need capital when issuing loans. Therefore,

reducing deposit rates helps stabilize their interest margin and hence improves their ability to lend to and support the real economy."

As lending rates dropped in China, Chinese commercial banks' net interest margin decreased to 1.73 percent on average as of the end of the third quarter, the lowest on record, according to Huafu Securities.

After decreasing in June and August by a total of 20 basis points, the country's one-year loan prime rate – a market-oriented benchmark lending rate – remained steady at 3.45 percent on Wednesday.

Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, said he expects a reduction in LPRs in the offing following Friday's deposit rate cuts, but more policy moves from the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, are still necessary to push financing costs down.

In the China Financial Stability Report 2023 published on Friday, the PBOC said it will focus on creating a favorable monetary and financial environment and satisfying effective financing demand of the real economy while strengthening financial stability by promoting the adoption of the financial stability law at an early date.

CBN allows bank accounts for cryptocurrency dealers

LAGOS

THE Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, has said that banks and other financial institutions can now provide account opening and other services to cryptocurrency exchanges and dealers also known as Virtual Assets Providers, VAPs.

Accordingly, the CBN said financial institutions are now permitted to open accounts for VAPs, provide designated settlement accounts and settlement services.

They can also act as channels for foreign exchange flows and trade and render any other ac-

tivity that may be permitted by the CBN from time to time.

However, the CBN said that bank accounts opened for VAPs cannot be used for cash withdrawals and third-party cheques.

Also, the CBN excluded banks from holding or transacting in cryptocurrencies.

Director, Financial Policy and Regulation, CBN, Haruna Mustafa, announced the new directive in a circular to banks and other financial institutions, titled "Guidelines on Operations of Bank Accounts for Virtual Assets Providers, VAPs".

The circular stated: "The CBN

in February 2021 issued a circular restricting banks and other financial institutions from operating accounts for cryptocurrency service providers in view of the money laundering and terrorism financing (ML/TF) risks and vulnerabilities inherent in their operations as well as the absence of regulations and consumer protection measures.

"However, current trends globally have shown that there is a need to regulate the activities of virtual assets service providers, VAPs, which include cryptocurrencies and crypto assets.

"Following this development,

the Financial Action Task Force, FATF, in 2018 also updated its Recommendation 15 to require VAPs to be regulated to prevent misuse of virtual assets for ML/TF/PE.

"Furthermore, Section 30 of the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 recognizes VAPs as part of the definition of a financial institution.

"In addition, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in May 2022 issued Rules on Issuance, Offering and Custody of Digital Assets and VAPs to provide a regulatory framework for their operations in Nigeria.

"In view of the foregoing, the CBN hereby issues this Guidelines to provide guidance to financial institutions under its regulatory purview in respect of their banking relationship with VAPs in Nigeria.

"The Guidelines supersedes the CBN's circulars referenced FPR/DIR/GEN/CIR/06/010 of January 12, 2017 and BSD/DIR/PUB/LAB/014/001 of February 5, 2021 on the subject.

"However, banks and other financial institutions are still prohibited from holding, trading and/or transacting in virtual currencies on their own account."

Best taxpayers recognised as EBM deploys drives up VAT collection

KIGALI

Forty outstanding taxpayers of the 2022/2023 fiscal year were, on December 22, awarded by the government, through Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), during the 21st Taxpayers Appreciation Day ceremony held in Kigali.

It was in line with the 2023 Taxpayer Appreciation Month organised under the theme "Request for EBM Receipt to Build Rwanda." During the celebration, RRA Commissioner General Pascal Bizimana Ruganintwari said that the use of Electronic Billing Machine (EBM) technology yielded good results.

"For instance, value-added tax (VAT) almost tripled compared to the last five years as it rose from Rwf259.1 billion to Rwf649.8 billion," he said adding that VAT taxpayers increased fourfold.

"This also contributed to Corporate Income Tax as it increased by more than five times from more than Rwf45.7 billion to Rwf259.2 billion," he said.

Though progress was achieved in line with taxation in the country, he said, there are still gaps in the use of EBM because some taxpayers do not use them, as well as undervaluation of goods in some cases, which hinder tax collection.

He indicated that such issues must be tackled, adding that RRA will continue to integrate technology in service delivery to further facilitate taxpayers, and make tax collection more efficient.

Speaking at the event, Prime Minister Edouard Ngirente appreciated taxpayers who performed well in meeting

tax obligations and urged all Rwandan residents "to make EBM use a culture," and contribute to the development of the country through effective tax payment.

"In line with tax payment vision, we also want to provide greater rewards to those (consumers) who request EBM [invoice] and present it," he said, adding that both the trader and consumer must make EBM use a responsibility.

He said that if every person who must pay tax does it, and EBM compliance is ensured, it would be easy to achieve - and even surpass - the target for fiscal year 2023/2024 to generate tax revenues enough to fund 52 per cent of the more than Rwf5 trillion national budget.

At Provincial level, Overall Best Taxpayer 2022 Northern Province went to Gorilla Nest Lodge & Golf Resort (also known as One&Only), Nshili Kivu Tea Factory outperformed other taxpayers in Southern Province, Pfunda Tea Company did the same in Western Province, while Manebu Industries excelled in Eastern Province.

Jean Bosco Nkundunkundiye scooped Overall Best Taxpayer 2022 Local Government Taxes.

Five entities were awarded in this category. They are namely MTN Rwandacell, Mota-Engil, IHS Rwanda, CIMERWA, and I&M Bank (Rwanda).

Also referred to as growing taxpayers' category, its awardees are Prime Cement, Kasese Distillers & Distributors, Africa Lubricant Manufacturing Co., and Shema Power Lake Kivu.

Winners in this category are COFATOLE, a company that manufactures of steel construction materials, Thousand

Hills Africa, Imizi Eco-tourism Development, and Construck.

Three people were appreciated for their outstanding performance in this category. They are Augustin Byukusenge, Anastase Nizeyimana, and Belinda Karenzi.

Joram Mugwaneza, Ruth Mukantabana, and Jobanputra Ramnik Shakuntala were awarded as best taxpayers in local government taxes Equinox Mining, FG Investment (R), and Simbi Coffee Investment were the winners in export-related tax compliance.

In this category, Bakhresa Grain Milling (Rwanda) - also known as Azam -outclassed other taxpayers.

In special categories, DU-HAMIC-ADRI was the best local non-governmental organisation (NGO) taxpayer, while the International NGO award went to Partners in Health.

The manufacturing sector best taxpayer award went to Master Steel, while University of Global Health Equity, performed well in voluntary disclosure.

According to the International Monetary Fund, voluntary disclosure allows taxpayers to comply with the tax laws and "come clean" about past tax-law infringements.

Skol Brewery, Inyange Industries, and Radiant Insurance Company, were recognised for their compliance with EBM use.

This recognition was given to Rwanda Wood Value Chain Association, ADARWA Association, and APARWA Association, whose work seeks to promote carpentry in Rwanda.

Jean Claude Mwirerwa was awarded as the best consumer for requesting EBM receipts for



Prime Minister Edouard Ngirente appreciated taxpayers who performed well in meeting tax obligations.

his purchases.

Mwirerwa said that he was encouraged to do that the main resource that the country has is its people, as well as accountability in the country's development.

"You can have a major impact

in the development of your country through requesting EBM receipts," citing funding security, and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Kepler College was announced the winner of RRA student debate on taxation, 2023.

Boeing delivers B787 Dreamliner to Juneyao Airlines

HANGZHOU

US aircraft manufacturer Boeing delivered a new B787 Dreamliner plane to Chinese private carrier Juneyao Airlines on Thursday in Seattle, the plane maker's first delivery of wide-body aircraft to Chinese mainland carriers in nearly three years.

The B787-9 aircraft, which took off after the delivery from Paine Field in Everett, the United States, is expected to arrive at Shanghai Pudong International Airport on Friday afternoon, Boeing said.

"The new delivery indicates that Boeing's global delivery capability of the B787 model has been further restored, and new aircraft has been delivered to customers worldwide," said Lin Zhijie, an aviation industry analyst.

"Besides, as the first delivery of the B787 in China in nearly three years, it also shows that China's international travel market is gradually recovering, and this is a milestone," Lin said.

Boeing said it will continue to support its customers in China and will be ready to deliver for customers when that time comes.

"This is the seventh B787 plane that we delivered to Juneyao Airlines. We believe that it will continue to help the carrier to expand its international network," said Peter Gao, Boeing vice-president for China commercial sales and marketing.

China's air travel market has been on a steady track of recovery since the country optimized its COVID-19 response measures late last year. This year, the country is expected to handle about 620 million air passenger trips, up 146 percent year-on-year, according to the projection of Flight Master, an intelligent travel services platform in China.

The delivery of the new B787 aircraft also indicates Shanghai-based Juneyao Airlines' goal to revitalize its growth in the international market, it said.

After taking the new delivery, Juneyao Airlines boasts a fleet size of 92 aircraft. The carrier said it would further optimize its route network based on passenger demand and market response.

"After three years, we resumed taking the delivery of new B787 aircraft again. It will help provide sufficient capacity guarantee for the growth of our international long-haul routes," said Wang Junjin, president of Juneyao Airlines.

In April 2024, the carrier will launch flights that connect Shanghai Pudong with Athens, Greece, and is considering launching more flights connecting China with cities in Europe and the United States. By the end of 2024, it will finish taking the deliveries of 10 B787 planes, it said.

The orders and deliveries of Boeing aircraft to Chinese carriers have been largely suspended after two fatal crashes of the single-aisle B737 MAX in 2018 and 2019.

The aircraft model resumed flying in late 2020, and it has resumed commercial operation in most parts of the world, including in China. Guangzhou-based China Southern Airlines resumed operation of the B737 MAX for commercial domestic flights in January, marking the model's return to the sky.



January blues: How to avoid a festive financial hangover

KIGALI

THE joy and excitement of the holiday season can often lead to overspending and accumulating debt. As January approaches and expenses such as children's school fees loom, how can you make sure to stay within your budget?

Teddy Kaberuka, an economic analyst, said that the festive season involves celebrations that require spending money on food, gifts, or outings, however, he stressed the importance of responsible buying and spending.

"Be conscious, don't be extravagant, and spend on something that has value for money. Don't overspend as a lot more requires money after the festive season. Be aware that January is like any other month."

Kaberuka recommends budgeting what one needs to spend, revisiting the list, and spending where necessary.

He stressed that when one efficiently manages their finances, the money saved can be invested in something else.

"In order not to be a burden to others requesting loans, you require financial discipline," Kaberuka said.

For Caroline Musuhukye, a financial expert in Kigali, those who receive a bonus can utilise their December salary and keep aside their bonus. Those who don't obtain bonuses should first check their expenses for January, set aside that amount, and spend what's left.

She explained that setting a clear goal for the money you save will help you meet your overall financial goals.

"If there is no budget, financial constraints will set in. Know your priorities and make a list of what you need to buy and then stick to it," Musuhukye said.

She urges working out how much you can afford to spend and allocate funds to cover all your expenses for the holiday period.

Musuhukye suggested setting spending limits, whether for gift shopping or other items, to avoid a financial hangover in the New Year.

"Look for means to cut back on spending. Instead of heading to an expensive hotel, bar, or restaurant, consider having a barbecue or small party at home."

Consider a staycation instead, she suggests. Purchase games, movies, and other fun activities for the family. This way, you save money on travel, hotel, and other expenses.

According to Angello Musunguzi, an expert in tax advisory and accounting, measure your income and spend sparingly.

"Purchase items that are necessary for your family. Avert peer influence shopping, for instance, it is not a must to have a Christmas tree and decorations just because everyone else is doing it," Musunguzi said.

He discourages borrowing to have a memorable Christmas, stressing that it can be catastrophic. "Don't change behaviour, buy what is essential, don't get excited, and buy things you don't need."

This is the first time that Rwandans celebrating Christmas post covid-19 pandemic and the excitement can be felt everywhere.

About 80% of Rwandans are Christians, giving an impression that they annually celebrate Christmas.

Well known customs during the festive season include decorating our homes with Christmas trees, exchanging gifts with friends and family, sharing meals with our loved ones, attending church and traveling to different places.

However, Christmas is and can be a budget-cracker when people want to make memorable moments.



A hawker sells toys to a customer in downtown Kigali.

When not cautious about your expenditure during the Christmas time, you are likely to meet financial hardships as the following year begins.

Having a budget on how to spend your income during the festive season can help you fight off financial messes and keep you on track with your bills.

As an individual, you would want to pay attention to how you spend your income during the holiday season in view of the fact that there is still what to spend on after the holiday is over.

Notably, students have been given a short holiday break to relish Christmas time with family and relatives but, the break ends on January 9, alerting parents that schools will be resuming soon enough after the holiday season.

Therefore, parents should not overspend during Christmas to avoid financial difficulties when taking their children back to school.

Precious Ida Kitaka, Headteacher at Precious Stones Foundation told The New Times that parents tend to request for a grace period, regarding the payment of school fees for their children.

"We all get hyped up by the festive season and realise it when the festive time is over. It's not just the parents, everyone should mind their spending in the course of the festive season" she adds.

Emelyne Iradukunda (not her real name) had a difficult time keeping her bills on track during Christmas last year, as a result of uncareful spending with her children and says that it came out of the need to make her family happy and have fun throughout the pandemic.

Generally, while going out to restaurants for food and sharing lunch with family and friends can be costly, you can save money and make the meals at your home, invite family and friends to celebrate Christmas in a simple, basic and fulfilling way.

Make a list of all the meals you would like to have on your dining table ahead of Christmas and what it takes to prepare them. Sharing a happy meal with your family and friends is the best. It will help you save the money that would have been spent on lunches and dinners.

Ruth Kairere, mother of seven, always makes Christmas time fun and worth enjoying on a budget and keeps it simple, magical and worth remembering for her children and the rest of her family.

"With such a vast family, I do not want to go out with my family to have meals and end up paying a lot of money when I can pre-

pare the meals at my home".

She says that she finds it less costly celebrating Christmas at home with her family and the rest of her friends than going out to fancy restaurants to spend that much money because to her, Christmas time is for socializing and enjoying magical moments of being together with the people you love.

"I invite my family, relatives and friends and we prepare meals together, play different games and exchange gifts, making it more entertaining for all who are present", says Ruth.

Also, you can come up with your own way of decorating your house based on what is your favorite color to make it look good and Christmas-y. Christmas decorations do not have to get you worked up, wondering about the best way to ensure a Christmas-giving vibe at your home.

Therefore, Christmas time should be less of a materialistic occasion but rather a time to have fun with your loved ones and more to that is that, making a budget for Christmas will enable you to keep track of your bills and reduce unnecessary expenses.



MONDAY - WEDNESDAY FROM 10:30 PM



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WORLD

EU faces tough decisions as bloc moves to expand

PRAGUE

MORE than two decades after Western Balkan countries embarked on their journey of accession to the European Union, their progress remains slow.

"We - and I include here Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Albania - remain as a kind of hole in the middle of the EU. Because only when you leave Serbia do you see that there are no more borders in the EU, and that we are the ones who are surrounded by walls," Slobodan, a 52-year-old resident of Serbia's capital Belgrade, said. "I would like my country to join (the EU), but I am skeptical that it will happen soon," he said, lamenting the bloc's lack of political will to expand and the lengthy waiting time.

Enlargement stagnation

Starting with six founding members in 1951, the EU has witnessed several rounds of enlargement, multiplying its membership nearly five times to become the current 27-member club. It officially declared the Western Balkan states potential candidates for membership in June 2003 following the EU-Western Balkans summit in Thessaloniki, Greece. However, no country has joined the bloc since 2013, when Croatia joined.

EU enlargement is the process whereby states join the bloc after they have fulfilled a set of political and economic conditions. Currently, nine countries, including the above-mentioned five Western Balkan nations, have candidate status - the first major step toward EU accession. However, each follows different processes of rapprochement with the EU.

One typical case here is North Macedonia, which had been an EU candi-

date for more than 17 years before its accession negotiations were launched last year. Previously, the country had been unable to enter the negotiations due to blocking from EU member countries over various disagreements.

According to the EU's enlargement policy, the opening of formal accession talks requires the unanimous agreement of all member states that all requirements have been met.

Even if candidate countries have managed to open accession talks with the EU, the negotiations could be complex and frustrating.

Serbia and Montenegro both started their accession talks some 10 years ago, but they have seen little progress in their membership bids, which analysts have attributed to the EU's reluctance to advance and to the hard reforms the candidate countries must undertake.

"The EU members do not agree on whether to continue the enlargement process. Declaratively, it is constantly said that the EU should expand to the Western Balkans, but in practice, this is not supported by several large and important countries," Mark Cigoj, a Croatian political analyst, told Xinhua.

New momentum

In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the EU's drive for expansion has gained momentum.

The membership bids of most Western Balkan countries have once again been brought to the forefront of the agenda after years of stagnation.

The EU granted Ukraine and Moldova candidate status in June last year, and in December 2022, BiH became the fifth Balkan nation to be given candidate status.

Debates on enlargement have intensified this year, with EU leaders multiplying meetings with countries knock-



In this April 28, 2023 photo, a Ukrainian APC fires towards Russian positions near Avdiivka, in the Donetsk region, Ukraine. (PHOTO / AP)

ing on the bloc's door.

In a declaration adopted after an informal summit this October in Granada, Spain, the EU leaders underlined that enlargement "is a geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity," noting that "the future of our aspiring members and their citizens lies within the European Union."

At their December summit, the EU leaders agreed to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova. They also granted Georgia candidate country status, and agreed to open accession negotiations with BiH once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved.

However, there has been internal discord as the agreement to open Ukraine's accession talks was not unanimous. The EU bypassed Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's objections by getting him to leave the room.

Professor Iain Begg from the London School of Economics and Political Science told Xinhua that the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the effort to assist Ukraine have become major political factors in the decision on whether or not Ukraine should lead the way for new members coming into the EU. "For the time being, it seems to transcend usual procedures of assessing the country's worth and whether it's got a strong enough case to become a member. So, that's going to play out both between the European level and candidate countries and between the European level and the member states of the EU," he said.

Multiple challenges

Given the new momentum, the EU is facing

many "delicate political challenges" to push enlargement forward. A persistent question is how to incorporate new members without undermining the bloc's efficiency and development.

There's concern that applicant states might absorb a substantial share of the EU cohesion FUNDS SHORTLY AFTER JOINING.

Public opinions are also divided on the benefits of EU enlargement. A survey of six EU countries released earlier this month by the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank showed that there is no clear majority support for any of the current candidate countries joining the bloc soon.

For a further enlarged bloc, both the EU and future member states need to be ready. Aspiring members need to step up their reform efforts, but the complexity of the EU accession process itself poses a challenge in the first place.

Starting negotiations is not necessarily a recipe for membership as there are various hurdles to be cleared before they conclude an agreement. The EU also has its own homework to do. How to reform the EU institutions to ensure they continue to function effectively? And how to reform the voting patterns to ensure that there is more flexibility in decision-making? Neither will be easy.

"Over the next decade, I think we'll see a difficult set of negotiations. Some are already underway, some depend on particular things being met, and some will depend on perceptions in EU member states, like, is it going to cost us too much? All these things are components of the very complicated jigsaw that has to be put together to make enlargement possible," Begg said.

Agencies

Ministry: Palestinian death toll in Gaza climbs to 20,258

GAZA / TEHRAN

The death toll of Palestinians from Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has so far risen to 20,258 since Oct 7, with 53,688 others being injured, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

It added that at least 201 Palestinians were killed and 368 injured in Israeli attacks in the past 24 hours.

Medical and security sources told Xinhua that at least 18 people were killed, and several others wounded on Saturday following an Israeli airstrike in central Gaza's al-Bureij refugee camp.

Meanwhile, another Israeli airstrike targeting the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza resulted in dozens of deaths and injuries, the sources added.

Israel has been launching a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on Oct 7, during which about 1,200 people were killed and more than 200 were taken hostage.

Also on Saturday, Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said Saturday that it has lost contact

with a group holding five Israeli hostages in the Gaza Strip, fearing some of the hostages may have been killed in an Israeli airstrike.

The spokesman for the Brigades Abu Ubaida said in a statement that the Brigades had lost contact with the group "during an Israeli raid."

He reported the names of three out of the five hostages, indicating that the Qassam Brigades suspect their deaths in one of the Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, while did not give further details to the other two hostages.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment.

The hostages are among an estimated 129 Israelis and foreigners who have been held by Hamas since it launched a surprise raid into southern Israel on Oct 7. Hamas has demanded the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the hostages.

During a weeklong humanitarian truce that ended Nov 30, Hamas freed 86 Israeli captives, including women and children, as well as 24 foreigners.

In Tehran, an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman on Saturday



A man grieves during the mourning of victims at a hospital in central Gaza Strip city of Deir el-Balah, on Dec 23, 2023. The death toll of Palestinians from Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has so far risen to 20,258 since Oct 7, with 53,688 others being injured, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said in a statement on Saturday. (PHOTO / XINHUA)

described the recent resolution adopted by the UN Security Council (UNSC) demanding immediate and unhindered humanitarian access throughout the Gaza Strip as "positive but insufficient."

In a statement published on the ministry's website, Nasser Kanaani said it was regrettable that while the Israeli attacks against the "defenseless people in Gaza" persist, the US government was still hindering the adoption of a binding resolution at the UNSC to end the "killing" in the coastal enclave, referring to the veto and abstention from the United States in related voting.

He added that under the continued Israeli bombardments and military attacks, sending "effective" humanitarian aid to Gaza "is practically not possible," stressing that the resolution's adoption did not reduce the UNSC's responsibilities toward Gaza. The 15-member Security Council passed on Friday the resolution with 13 votes in favor, no votes against, and two abstentions from the US and Russia. The vote followed a US veto of a Russian amendment that would have restored the call for a "suspension of hostilities."

Agencies

Bengaluru airport's T2 recognised as one of 'world's most beautiful' airports by UNESCO's Prix Versailles

KEMPEGOWDA International Airport Bengaluru has achieved notable recognition at the 2023 Prix Versailles organised by UNESCO. The airport's Terminal 2 (T2) was acknowledged as one of the 'World's most beautiful airports' and received the esteemed 'World special prize for an interior 2023.'

In the global evaluation conducted by the Prix Versailles 2023 judges panel, led by renowned fashion designer Elie Saab, Bengaluru airport emerged as the sole Indian airport to be honored, underscoring its dedication to exceptional design and architecture on an international level.

Terminal 2, recognised earlier with the prestigious IGBC platinum certification by the Indian Green Building Council, aligns with the IGBC Green New Building Rating system. In its first phase, T2 is designed to accommodate 25 million passengers per annum, blending functionality with aesthetic appeal. The terminal's unique combination of art and technology aims to leave a lasting impression on global travelers, offering a glimpse of the cultural richness of the state and country.

Sustainable design

The sustainable design of T2, acknowledged as the world's largest terminal pre-certified with a platinum LEED rating by the US Green Building Council even before operational commencement, reflects the airport's commitment to environmental responsibility. The terminal has also received the coveted platinum certification under the IGBC green new building rating system, as outlined in an official statement.

Artistic theme

Earlier during the Art walkthrough of Terminal 2 at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru, Yamini Telkar, the head of the Art Programs, said "the theme of Naurasa is not only culturally pertinent but also highly fitting for an airport terminal. Recognising that every passenger carries their unique stories and emotions, the aim is to showcase this diversity through the chosen artistic theme."

Airports act as a canvas reflecting a diverse range of human emotions, and the art pieces at Terminal 2 of Kempegowda International Airport vividly showcase this intricate tapestry. Revolving around two core themes - the rich heritage and culture of Karnataka, and the nine emotions encapsulated in Bharata Natyashastra's Navarasa - the art installations are strategically positioned throughout the terminal.

Exceptional artworks

Every piece of artwork is accompanied by a unique narrative that resonates with the theme of Naurasa. Striking a harmonious balance between technology, art, and sustainability, Terminal 2 (T2) passengers at Kempegowda International Airport can immerse themselves in a diverse array of works by artists from around the world, strategically showcased throughout the terminal. The domestic zones in T2 feature distinct artworks, while the international zones showcase another set of captivating pieces.

Each artwork represents a different facet of human emotions, acknowledging the varied emotional states of travelers - be it happiness, sadness, fatigue, anxiety, or stress. The overarching goal of this compelling compilation of artworks is to provide passengers with a seamless travel experience, recognizing and addressing the spectrum of emotions that accompany every traveler in the airport. The culmination of these initiatives aims to transform T2 into a "biodiversity hotspot." Agencies

Iran hosts int'l conference in support of Palestinians

TEHRAN

IRAN hosted an international conference to rally support for the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank on Saturday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The one-day Tehran International Conference on Palestine aimed to lift the blockade of Gaza and ensure more humanitarian aid for the coastal territory, said the statement.

The conference, as part of Iran's diplomatic efforts to back the Palestinians, was attended by officials, political, religious, media figures and scholars from more than 50 countries, the statement added.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, speaking at the conference, accused the United States of being the "first and biggest violator of democracy in the world," and urged it not to "draw up plans for the future of Gaza, as the future of this region will be determined by its people and legal government," according to the statement. Raisi denounced the "global hegemonic system" for violating human rights in Gaza, expressing regret for the deaths of many Palestinian civilians, including children and women, and the destruction of many homes in the war-torn enclave over recent weeks. Xinhua

China's thriving rural tourism attracts global attention

CHINESE villages once again received worldwide attention recently as four of them earned a coveted spot on the "Best Tourism Villages" list for 2023 in the latest announcement by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The four villages are Huangling village in Jiangxi province, Xiajiang village in Zhejiang province, Zhagana village in Gansu province, and Zhujiawan village in Shaanxi province.

Together with Yucun village in Zhejiang province and Xidi village in Anhui province listed in 2021, as well as Dazhai village

in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and Jingzhu village in Chongqing municipality listed in 2022, China now has eight UNWTO "Best Tourism Villages," more than any other countries in the world.

The list of "Best Tourism Villages" by UNWTO, which was initiated in 2021, has brought more and more Chinese villages to the international arena, mirroring the prosperous rural development of China and providing a perspective for the world on China.

Huangling village is known as a village "hanging" on the cliffs, and it has gained

worldwide fame for its unique tradition of drying colorful crops on rooftops of Hui-style buildings, including chili peppers, ears of corn, rice and green beans. This tradition not only showcases bountiful harvests, but also reflects the prosperous and fulfilling lives of the villagers.

In recent years, Huangling village has hosted the International Tourism Village Chief Summit, engaging in dialogues with renowned villages from France, the Netherlands, and other countries, continuously enhancing Huangling's international influence.

An executive of Wuyuan Huangling Cultural Tourism Co., Ltd. told People's Daily that by exploring local culture, Huangling village has made great efforts to create tourism products, restore the traditional architecture and layout of the village, and integrate intangible cultural heritage resources.

In Xidi village, ancient architecture is cherished deeply by the villagers. Currently, the village houses three ancestral halls, an archway, and 224 ancient residential buildings built in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), making it an

outstanding representative of ancient villages in Huizhou, Anhui province.

In order to boost local tourism, Xidi village set up a tourism development company and built a place where tourists can experience the intangible cultural heritage and local farming culture, said Hu Aoli, director of the village committee. Today, the village is attracting visitors with not only its beautiful scenery, but also the splendid local culture.

Recently, multiple places in Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Gansu province saw snowfalls, including Zhaga-

na village, which has shown a unique winter scenery. In recent years, the village has leveraged its unique natural and cultural landscapes, as well as its folk customs, to explore a path of rural tourism that not only contributes to ecological conservation but also promotes exchanges, communication, and integration among different ethnic groups.

Many tourists shared their experiences about the tour on social media, saying it is worthwhile to see this tranquil and enchanting place with ancient architecture and beautiful scenery. People's Daily

Sustainable India: An emerging leader of the circular economy

For emerging market economies, the modern development predicament is to support growth with inclusivity while safeguarding the environment and making action-oriented policies to combat climate change. The UN, through Agenda 2030, has voiced this concern by promoting the practices of a circular economy, envisaged in its SDG Goal 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), Goal 13 (Climate change), and Goal 8 (on economic growth), among others. Contrary to the popularly followed designs of economic growth, which are primarily linear in their execution, the circular economy model is highly multi-dimensional and inclusive. This is because the circular economy model doesn't include any externalities like pollution and waste in its inherent design, and thus, the focus is on extending the life cycle of the products.

A typical production and consumption process inherently creates negative externalities for various stakeholders, increasing costs to individuals, firms, and the environment. On the contrary, the circular economy model is based on the practices of sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling[1], thereby minimizing and eliminating market failures of negative externalities. Though the concept sounds all hunky dory, the primary concern lies in the transitioning of the economy from a linear pattern of consumption and production to a circular one, particularly for the developing nations struggling to strike a balance between growth and sustainability.

In this context, among the Global South, India is fast emerging as the poster face of the circular economy model, using a restorative approach to production and consumption by redesigning, recovering, and reusing products

and materials and limiting inefficient utilization of resources. When we say economy, it conceptually implies the involvement of all stakeholders, whether producers, consumers, financial institutions, or the state. Understanding this, India has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach, where all are encouraged to be active participants and not passive recipients in attaining environmental sustainability. The task is to bring reforms to both the demand and the supply side of the economy, thus addressing the issues in the "take-make-waste" model across the stakeholders.

This is where India has emerged in the forefront among the developing countries. On the production side, India proactively encourages businesses and welcomes investments supporting circular economy business models. For investors, India has become a significant target as it offers a swifter and flexible switch to sustainable production practices, unlike the developed markets, where the linear process is rigid and switching costs are high. A famous example of India Inc.'s committing to the circular economy is the partnership of Aditya Birla Group's initiatives in the bauxite industry within its organization boundaries. To utilize the by-products of bauxite refining, Aditya Birla Group's Hindalco partnered with the Group's subsidiary UltraTech Cement to use the residue as input in the cement manufacturing process[2]. As per FICCI's report[3], about 97 percent of the leaders from major 100 companies in India are committed to linking their sustainability goals to their financial performance. Most companies are adopting circular economy objects through product/service recirculation, absolute consumption reduction goals, and the use of non-virgin / sustainably produced materials,



among others.

During the G20 presidency, India emphasized four significant tenets: circular economy in the steel sector, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), circular economy, and establishment of an industry-led resource efficiency and circular economy industry coalition. Under EPR, India has resolved to sustainable development and circular economy by encouraging the replacement of natural resource usage with valuable waste materials. On the policy side, through EPR, India intends to make producers responsible for the environmental impacts of their products throughout their life cycle, promote better waste management, and reduce the burden on municipalities. In the case of plastic packaging, the government has provided a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste and develop new alternatives to plastics. It also emphasizes the reuse of rigid plastic packaging material and enforces the prescription of a minimum level of recycling of plastic packaging waste[4].

Recently, in December 2023, India

produced a roadmap for reducing plastic waste in India, in collaboration with Australian research institutions, to foster research and industry partnerships for India's transition to a circular economy in the Plastics sector[5]. The government also launched a Circular Economy Cell (CE Cell) in its think tank, the NITI Aayog, in 2022, focusing on sectoral circular economy action plans[6]. Internationally as well, India has stood exemplary in its initiatives by being a significant part of the global participation with the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), creation of LeadIT, Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) and the Big Cat Alliance, among others[7].

Not only the supply side, India has also been encouraging demand side stakeholders to be active participants in boosting the circular economy. To enable individuals, the Prime Minister's call to Mission LIFE - Lifestyle for Environment, is a people-centric, action-oriented approach. Like the producers, it makes citizens mindful of their choices,

discouraging throwaway culture, increasing consumer awareness about the problems of waste generation, and reducing environmental footprints. LiFE has become an India-led global mass movement[8] promoting environmentally conscious and pro-plant choices. It calls for the revision of sustainable traditional practices rooted in indigenous culture and values. This is where nations of the Global South from Africa and South Asia stand to benefit, revisiting their traditional sustainable practices and exchanging traditional circular economy practices of indigenous communities across the Global South.

By changing the way people demand commodities, the objective is to put in motion a bottom-up approach where individual demands for environment-friendly products persuade industries and governments to change their patterns and adopt inclusive and greener production and policy formulation models. To put it in a nutshell, given the rising importance of India's economic, cultural, and diplomatic presence internationally, it has, through its efforts, acquired a distinctive status as a global leader in sustainability practices. India has committed itself to achieving the Agenda 2030 and swiftly adopt resilient circular economy practices. As per estimates, India is expected to reap yearly benefits of US\$ 624 billion by reducing the negative externalities by embracing the circular economy by 2050[9]. Thus, India's evolving framework of circular economy holds even greater relevance for the Global South[10], while India emerges as a global leader in the promotion and implementation of the transition from linear to circular economy.

Financial Post

A Just Russia - For Truth party congress supports Putin's nomination for presidential vote

MOSCOW

THE congress of the AJust Russia - For Truth party has supported incumbent head of state Vladimir Putin's nomination for the 2024 presidential election, a TASS correspondent reported.

The decision was made unanimously, with 192 delegates voting in favor of Putin's nomination.

The party did not plan to nominate its own candidate for the election. Such a decision was made at the previous party congress in May.

President Vladimir Putin sent his greetings to the delegates and guests of the party congress, thanking them for their support. Putin added that he was looking forward to further constructive dialogue for the benefit of the country and the people.

The Federation Council (the upper house of parliament) formally designated March 17, 2024 as the date of the presidential election. In turn, the Russian Central Election Commission decided that citizens would be able to cast their ballots during a three-day voting period on March 15-17, making this Russia's first three-day presidential election.



The decision was made unanimously, with 192 delegates voting in favor of Putin's nomination

Months after attacks, Pakistan's Christians still feel unsafe

By Caroline Davies in Jaranwala, north-eastern Pakistan

FOUR months ago, the Christian community in the city of Jaranwala, in north-eastern Pakistan, saw nearly two dozen churches and tens of homes ransacked by hundreds of protesters. In the aftermath, the government promised money to help rebuild. As they prepare for Christmas, many here are still living with the damage and shock of the attack.

The Christmas carol procession lurches its way through Jaranwala's back streets, gathering singers as we go.

We start at the church, the pastor, two drummers, 15 or so enthusiastic singers, lighting the way through the dark streets with phone torches. With each turn more come to their doors to join.

Children are dressed in their Christmas best, some belting out their favourite carol lines. Others shyly join in, dressed in sparkly dresses with glittery bows, Father Christmas hats and light-up trainers, stomping through the streets. Some of the older boys throw small firecrackers, giggling as their mothers shout at them for making them jump.

Christmas traditions in Jaranwala have a renewed importance to Pastor Rizwan Mill this year.

"Christmas now is in all our hearts," he says, taking a small break from leading the congregation. "Christ is a saviour for me. He saved me during the hours of the attack. He is all our saviour."

On 16 August, thousands gathered in Jaranwala, angry at allegations that someone from the Christian community had deliberately damaged pages from the holy Quran. People were being accused of blasphemy.

The crowd turned violent, attacking churches and private homes. Many from the Christian community fled, spending the night in open fields, fearful of returning to the city. While nine police officers were injured, no civilian lives were lost.

The police promised justice, arresting more than 350 people, while the government promised to help rebuild both trust and the buildings.

The authorities have said that all 22 churches that were attacked have now been renovated and reopened - the walls are still crisp with fresh paint and the floors have that new carpet smell.

Alongside money from the government, there have been works and donations by charities, NGOs and outreach programmes between local mosques and churches.

But four months later, some homes still show the scars of that night.

We find Saima sitting in the one room of her home still intact, surrounded by blackened walls. The money has been paid, she says, but once divided amongst all the relatives who live in the building, it wasn't enough. The damage was extensive and the repair work is taking time. "This was a very beautiful house," she tells me. "My parents built it, they saved every penny for

it. It takes a whole lifetime to build a house. And now it's all burnt. Whatever we had, it's all burnt."

She says the whole household - including her, her siblings and their children, four families in total - were given two million rupees, around \$7,100 (£5,586).

Some of that money has gone on rent for those who can't stay in the house. Now it is just Saima and one sister-in-law that live in the only habitable room.

"We are so tired," she tells me quietly. She begins to cry. "In this one room, there is no facility, there is no light, no water, we don't have anything. We just want this house to be rebuilt."

The authorities in Jaranwala told the BBC that 78 households were identified by a damage assessment committee and given two million rupees each. The amount, they stated, was decided after examining the damage of each house.

Across the road, work is still underway at Sonam's house.

When we visited in August, one bedroom was still smouldering, another had a broken window. The bed had been thrown from the first floor to the street.

Now the rooms are repainted, with new furniture - although the bedroom door still has blunt holes, hacked into the wood by rioters. The memories too are still close to the surface.

"We don't feel safe here," Sonam says.

"The fear that entered our hearts is still there. Any shouting in the street, everyone goes out to see

what is happening because we are so scared. It's very hard to trust again."

"As a society and as a police force we have to rebuild trust," says Captain Ali Zia, city police officer. "Both have already done a lot to do that."

But there is still some lingering anger.

At the time of the attacks, some criticised the police for failing to stop the damage or step in before the crowd got out of control.

"Our first priority was to save lives," says Captain Zia. "The second was to save property. Nine of the police officials were injured that day; the police did take the brunt. By and large we do have people's trust."

Police say around a quarter of the 350 originally arrested are still in prison. The others are out on bail, but authorities are adamant cases will still be brought against them.

"There is a process of law," Captain Zia says. "The police department and the government are two of the biggest stakeholders here. We want to show that this act won't be tolerated in the future. If we don't ensure justice, it will keep happening."

Captain Zia says he hopes the court cases will start early in 2024. Until then, the police are loath to be drawn on details of both the blasphemy case and the violent mob. But of the violence in the streets, police say there is no indication that the reaction was pre-planned and instead believe the call to protest was spontaneously spread through social media. **BBC**

Russian diplomat points to evidence of Bucha incident being staged

MOSCOW

THE lack of response to Moscow's requests for a list of those killed in Bucha proves that it was an incident staged by Ukraine with the assistance of the US and the UK, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told TASS.

"The lack of response from the relevant international organizations to requests from the Russian authorities and media to provide the list of those killed in Bucha makes it clear that it was a necrophilous staged incident," she said.

"It was arranged by the Kiev regime at the behest and with the support of the Americans and the British," Zakharova (pictured) added. According to her, the incident was inspired by "the act of provocation that the Third Reich had staged in Nemmersdorf in 1944."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told Channel One on December 18 that Moscow had expected an investigation to be launched after the events in Bucha, at least to receive a list of those killed, but nothing had been done.

Earlier, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) evaded a TASS question as to what was hindering an independent investigation into the Bucha events.

Russian Investigative Committee Chairman Alexander Bastrykin said in April 2022 that a criminal investigation had been launched under Article 207.3 of the Russian Criminal



Code ("Public Dissemination of False Information about the Use of the Russian Armed Forces") following a Ukrainian act of provocation in Bucha, a suburb of Kiev.

He noted that the Ukrainian Defense Ministry had provided video footage purportedly taken in Bucha to Western media outlets, describing it as proof of mass civilian killings, in a bid to discredit the Russian Armed Forces.

However, statements made by the mayor of Bucha on March 31, 2022, combined with other reports, have substantiated the fact that the Russian army pulled out of the town on March 30.

Moreover, a video filmed by Ukrainians which surfaced on social media platforms immediately after the withdrawal of Russian troops made no mention at all of the alleged killing of civilians. **Agencies**

"SELLING bamboo earned me a net profit of around 200,000 yuan (\$27,987)," said bamboo grower Li Kaiping from Tianchi village, Qingshen county, Meishan, southwest China's Sichuan province, while harvesting bamboo that had just matured.

These bamboo were later sent to a bamboo industrial park 15 kilometers away, where they were processed into bamboo pulp paper. The paper manufactured in the industrial park now holds a 30-percent market share of natural-color tissue paper in China.

As the use of plastics is gradually replaced by bamboo, the industrial park is working to establish a new production line of mulch made from bamboo fiber to seize market opportunities.

Recently, a three-year action plan on promoting the substitute of plastics with bamboo was jointly released by China's National De-

China's Sichuan promotes bamboo as eco-friendly substitute for plastics

velopment and Reform Commission and other departments. This has presented new opportunities for Sichuan, which ranks second in China in terms of bamboo forest area, to strengthen and extend the chain of the bamboo industry.

"I was so busy! I never thought that bamboo-related tourism would be so popular," said Nie Zhijun, head of the collective economic organization of Zhaoping village, Baijie township, Naxi district of Sichuan's Luzhou, referring to the tourist boom at a bamboo culture attraction in the village during the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holiday.

It was the first long holiday since the attraction opened, and its business volume more than doubled, according to Nie.

The integration of the bamboo

industry and cultural tourism has brought benefits to Naxi district, prompting it to launch 20 provincial-level cultural tourism programs that cover rehabilitation, nature education, floral parks and many other sectors. Tourists flock to Naxi district almost every holiday and weekend.

Taking advantage of this momentum, Naxi has gradually developed a circulation of the bamboo industry in which it grows and processes bamboo, as well as farms and feeds poultry in bamboo forests. Bamboo fungus, black fungus, herbal medicines and chickens are cultivated in bamboo forests to bring extra income to farmers.

"It is important to ensure that the people engaged in the bamboo industry can truly get rich,"

said an official in Naxi. According to the official, more than 34,500 mu (2,300 hectares) of under-forest cultivation and breeding bases have been established in the district, and the output per mu is expected to increase by over 4,000 yuan.

Statistics show that the total area of bamboo forests in Sichuan province stands at 18.35 million mu. However, the province has long suffered from low bamboo yield per unit area.

There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, about 2 million mu of bamboo forests were low-yield and low-efficiency forests, with poor varieties and insufficient irrigation facilities, resulting in slow growth of bamboo. Secondly, the lack of well-developed transportation and other infrastructure

leads to high logging costs, making farmers unwilling to harvest.

According to the Sichuan forestry and grassland administration, 1/3 of bamboo in Sichuan was left unused every year.

"By building roads and standardizing plantation bases, the labor cost for bamboo harvesting can be reduced by half," said an executive of a state-owned forest farm in Guang'an, Sichuan province.

The forest farm divided its 2,250 mu of bamboo forests into 15 small sections, standardized spacing and built operational pathways, thus gradually making mechanized bamboo harvesting possible.

"In the past, a worker could only harvest 1 ton of bamboo per day, but now, with the help of ma-

chinery, the number is lifted to 6 to 8 tons," said the executive.

In October 2023, Renhe township in Jiang'an county, Yibin, Sichuan province launched a train for transporting bamboo, which has reduced labor cost per ton of bamboo by 80 percent and made unharvested bamboo forests useful.

To promote the substitute of plastics with bamboo, it is necessary to develop new technologies in bamboo processing and expand new scenarios for bamboo applications.

In 2018, Kingwen county of Yibin developed over a thousand types of bamboo products for hotels, restaurants, long-haul transportation, and home furnishing. It also established China's first comprehensive trading platform for

bamboo-made daily necessities.

On Nov. 14, a bamboo technology firm based in Guangyuan completed tests for a clean and environmentally friendly fiber production program that was led by its chief engineer Qiao Guangfang. This program will soon be put into trial operation.

Thanks to new techniques employed, no wastewater will be discharged during bamboo fiber production, and each fiber produced is as strong as two in the past.

Recently, Sichuan province issued relevant policies to promote the development of the bamboo industry. These policies further emphasize the need to strengthen technological support and initiate extensive research on the production of bamboo products for daily use, with an aim to substitute more materials with bamboo. **People's Daily**

City archrivals in subdued Xmas minibreak with 'cool' league ties

By Correspondent John Kimbute

CITY archrivals Simba SC and Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, arrived at Christmas with a match day in which they reduced the deficit in the games they have played in the NBC Premier League.

The match-day results were smug for the Msimbazi Street side and satisfactory for their next-street rivals Yanga, as Simba SC had a 2-2 draw with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

Yanga had a 1-0 victory over Tabora United at Jamhuri Stadium in Dodoma, where the latter carried the respect of the spectators and the former, the three points.

It was a far more ordinary pair of league encounters than the bustling competition of CAF Champions League qualification matches.

While there is a chance that the glue cementing affinities at the Msimbazi Street side will not be affected by the slight slide in form, there were background worries that could, in a sense, invite fear of a minimum of disquiet.

The key event was the side-lining of two players, a regular player, and a training mate, without a chance of making it to the starting line-up, in Clatous Chama and Nassor Kapama.

There was all the same little discord in that development, as the former playmaker was nowhere near rivaling current head coach Abdelhak Benchikha as to who is more important to the side, its real hope.

The match itself looked like it was a glimpse of the past, where there were numerous complaints about team cohesion, especially in the wake of the massive deficit in the derby.

This was the turning point where the then head coach Roberto Oliveira was given his marching orders, and someone came from upper-level football, one who won cups with clubs that now the two city giants play in the CAF Champions League.

The performance the side put in the past two ties in the continental tourney, and especially the last match, was captivating, leaving little room for a recalcitrant player to win any favour with the fans.

That is why this level of play and persistent league doldrums where the side appears to put up a fairly ordinary game with hardly any credible inspiration remains an anomaly in the rank and file of the club.

There is reason to believe that the side is now better than it was at the time of the derby, and when



Simba SC forward, John Bocco (L), negotiates his way past Kinondoni Municipal Council FC's center-back, Ismail Gambo, as the two clubs locked horns in a 2023/24 NBC Premier League clash which took place in Dar es Salaam on Saturday and ended in a 2-2 draw. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

a moment comes to demonstrate it, players get cold feet and play a fairly normal game, not one reflecting a changed atmosphere.

It is this aspect that the fans were demanding, or at least expected, but proved somewhat out of reach.

Not much effort will be directed at analyzing the pros and cons of the 1-0 win for Yanga.

They gained three points and everyone was satisfied. Yet it appears that their opponents prepared for the game meticulously, visibly so.

For the newcomers to put up a captivating performance against the city giants that have been reveling in 5G wins for a series of match days is likely to have touched a wide section of the soccer public.

Like their next street rivals, the Jangwani Street side has a new and more versatile manager even compared to the fabulous Nasreddine Nabi, a performance which illustrates that the Yanga recruitment method both for players and technical bench staff is weird but sure as if in betting positioning.

Too often they seek out those finishing contracts and wish to decide on the next move, not splash money to draw out a player from a major premier league

side, by negotiating with the club.

So this method has worked methodically for Yanga and, for that matter, it has traded either players or technical bench staff at the end of the past season.

Morocco's FAR Rabat gave a better quotation to the Jangwani Street side head coach Nabi, just as Pyramids FC gave better terms to attacker Fiston Maye and he similarly left.

It implies that the club management or leadership picked up second best from those needed by other clubs, more endowed with resources than themselves, but still capable of drawing out any player or head coach not in current employment of the big clubs, whether in either North Africa or some other parts of Africa, chiefly.

At the same time, what is seen in the technical bench recruitment strategy is a sharper focus on technique and visible ability, such that a stream of coaches on both sides of the western Kariakoo business zone has gradually brought about fairly unexpected turns in how the teams play.

Nabi had the credit of steering the side through the CAF Confederation Cup after losing the preliminary contest for the CAF Champions League Group Stage, and many thought he was the

best coach they would have for the foreseeable future, and now this is being turned around.

The commandeering of Miguel Angel Gamondi and exploits of the side have made last season nearly a thing of the past, despite some lingering worries.

Even then this new reputation was not demonstrated in the last pre-Xmas match which was just short of disturbing for the rank and file in the club, a few days after seeing off Ghanaian giants Medeama SC 3-0 at Benjamin Mkapa Stadium, nicknamed 'Estadio de Lupaso'.

This heart-warming performance looks like it will not be the order of the day, in like manner as the 5G wins of the earlier period.

Whether this has to do with the rotating of players that the fans at once demand, and often dread, is one thing, just as the same question may be asked of their archrivals' nonchalant performance against a brisk, determined city club.

While performance on the pitch is zigzagging, the stunning handling of top CAF Champions League sides left no questions on the table, and the speed of play put an end to the softer skills display of Clatous Chama, close to calling it a day with the city giants.

SPORT

Bayport now enhances 2023 Rombo Marathon

By Guardian Correspondent

THE Bayport Financial Services has added splendor and successfully facilitated the 2023 Rombo Marathon, held at Rombo town, Kilimanjaro, yesterday, to promote tourist attractions in the district.

In its second year, the Rombo Marathon was attended by government officials, guests, and prominent individuals.

Deputy Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, Doto Biteko, was the race's guest of honour.

Speaking during the race, Bayport's Director of Operations, Nderingo Materu, stated that Bayport had willingly sponsored the Rombo Marathon to support the government's efforts and the founder of the event, the Minister for Education and Rombo Member of Parliament, Adolf Mkenda, in promoting tourism and environmental conservation.

Materu disclosed: "As you know, Bayport has been a leader in environmental conservation through tree planting, today, we have decided to sponsor the Rombo Marathon and will continue to support any efforts in the country aimed at promoting tourism and environmental conservation."

He added: "Additionally, recognizing the importance of physical exercise for the well-being of our employees and families, we believe these races will also inspire Tanzanians to emphasize the importance of exercise in preventing non-communicable diseases."

Deputy Prime Minister, Biteko, congratulated the organizers and sponsors of the Rombo Marathon, noting its significant success, particularly in fostering the cultural heritage of the Rombo people and showcasing the tourist at-

tractions in the district and the region.

Biteko said: "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the founder of the Rombo Marathon, Minister for Education, and Rombo Member of Parliament, Mkenda, I also commend the Kilimanjaro regional government, Rombo District, and all sponsors who have contributed their resources to make this event a success."

"The government, under the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, will continue to support any efforts aimed at bringing development to the people of Rombo and Tanzanians as a whole," the Deputy Prime Minister noted.

Rombo Member of Parliament, Adolf Mkenda, expressed gratitude to Deputy Prime Minister, Biteko, for accepting the role of the guest of honour.

Mkenda moreover appreciated Bayport Financial Services for facilitating the significant event for the development of Rombo people and Kilimanjaro residents.

"I thank Deputy Prime Minister for joining the Rombo community in participating in this event, I also express my gratitude to all sponsors who have contributed to making this event of high quality, including Bayport Financial Services," Mkenda, also the marathon's founder, disclosed.

Earlier, Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner, Nurdin Babu, took the opportunity to welcome all guests from within and outside Tanzania to explore the tourist attractions in the region, assuring them that Kilimanjaro is safe and ready to receive and serve them.

The Rombo Marathon, now in its second year, featured three categories, namely 21km, 10km, and Fun Run stretching 5km.



Deputy Prime Minister, Doto Biteko, presents a certificate of appreciation to Bayport Financial Services Human Resources Manager, Evalyn Hall (R), acknowledging the company's contribution as the main sponsor of the 2023 Rombo Marathon which took place in Rombo, Kilimanjaro yesterday. Standing on the right of the Deputy Prime Minister is the Minister for Education and Rombo MP, Adolf Mkenda, and on Biteko's left is Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner, Nurdin Babu. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Premier Projects Academy rewards junior basketballers

By Guardian Correspondent

YOUNGSTERS that are training at the Premier Projects Academy, last weekend, were presented with awards by the center's leadership to motivate them to work hard.

The Premier Projects Academy's Director, William Mziray, awarded all junior players who are training at the center's venue, Premier Projects Arena, located at Machava in Kigamboni District.

Julius John (aged 14), one of the youngsters training at the center, praised the entire leadership of the center for the great work it doing.

John revealed the center's leadership is caring for the youngsters and goes as far as monitoring them in schools

and making sure they also learn basketball.

"We are monitored in schools without our knowledge, we were only told after the center's management had left," John disclosed.

The junior basketballer congratulated the center's founders for inventing something that could help them know basketball rules as well as play.

"I didn't even know how to hold the ball and bounce it, now I know and I've been playing in the junior leagues," John noted.

Issa Kassim (aged 11), congratulated the Premier Projects Academy center's leadership for giving them Christmas gifts.

"The gifts we got include notebooks, school cans, and other things related to studies,

they are equipment we need," Kassim disclosed.

Mziray said that awarding both male and female junior players is his center's strategy to motivate the youngsters.

He said they have hired coach Jovin Charles, popularly known as 'Peter Crouch', as one of the center's coaches to ensure that the center is leading in quality in the country.

Mziray said the coach will collaborate with other coaches present at the center, namely Tukusubira Mwalusamba and Mwalimu Heri.

"I trust all coaches because they are all the best basketball players in the country. Charles and Heri play for Dar City Club, whereas Tukusubira plays for Vijana Queens," Mziray revealed.



Junior basketballers who are training at the Premier Projects Academy, located in Kigamboni District, Dar es Salaam pose for a photo after taking part in a recent training session that took place at the center. PHOTO: CORRESPONDENT

Arsenal hold Liverpool to seal top spot at Christmas, Man Utd misery mounts

LONDON

ARSENAL will spend Christmas Day on top of the Premier League after they held title rivals Liverpool to a pulsating 1-1 draw at Anfield on Saturday, while Manchester United crashed to a dismal 2-0 defeat at West Ham that piled pressure on Erik ten Hag.

Mikel Arteta's Arsenal took an early lead through Gabriel Magalhaes, but Mohamed Salah hauled Liverpool level before the interval.

A draw was arguably the right result after both sides flexed their muscles to show why they have emerged as the leading contenders to win the title.

Chasing a first title since 2004, Arsenal sit one point clear of second placed Liverpool heading into the festive period.

The team that has topped the Premier League at Christmas has gone on to win the title in six of the past 10 seasons, but the draw on Merseyside was also a boost to the chasing pack.

Third placed Aston Villa are level on points with Liverpool, fourth placed Tottenham are three points further back, while champions Manchester City are six points adrift of the leaders with a game in hand.

"An unbelievable game of football, one of the most intense I've witnessed in 20 years in this league. For many

moments we were on top, in the last 20 minutes we wanted it more, but a draw is a fair result," Arteta said.

"I'm happy to be where we are. Tomorrow we have a beautiful dinner with our families, then back to work."

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp added: "Arsenal are really exceptional but for those 20 minutes we had them, we shattered them slightly.

"We felt that they were shaky and we should have used that."

At the London Stadium, Ten Hag's United side were blown away by late West Ham strikes from Jarrod Bowen and Mohammed Kudus, condemning the visitors to an eighth Premier League loss already this season.

United, languishing in eighth place, have managed just one win in their last seven games in all competitions.

They have lost three of their last four matches and failed to score in any of them for the first time since 1992.

It has been a wretched second season for Ten Hag, whose team have been eliminated from Europe after finishing bottom of their Champions League group, while also crashing out of the League Cup.

United have lost 13 games in all competitions this season -- their most defeats before Christmas since 1930-31 when they finished bottom of the table.

"In this moment we are underperforming," Ten Hag said. "We have to



Gabriel scores the opener for Arsenal. Agencies

be calm, stick together, stick to the plan, we have to do it together."

- Welch makes history -

At Craven Cottage, Rebecca Welch

became the first woman to referee a Premier League match as struggling Burnley won 2-0 at Fulham.

Last month, the 40-year-old became the first woman to act as fourth

official in a Premier League game as part of the officiating team for Fulham's match against Manchester United.

It was an impressive debut for

Welch, who ignored boos from the Fulham fans when she booked Calvin Bassey after his arm caught Josh Brownhill.

Wilson Odobert's 47th minute opener for Burnley needed no intervention from Welch and her assistants, with Sander Berge's 66th minute goal sealing just the third win this season for the second-bottom Claret.

Tottenham moved up to fourth, three points behind Arsenal, with a 2-1 win against Everton in north London. Richarlison put Tottenham ahead against his former club in the ninth minute.

Son Heung-min doubled the lead in the 18th minute and Andre Gomes's 82nd minute reply was too late for Everton.

Luton bolstered their bid for survival with an impressive 1-0 win against Newcastle at Kenilworth Road.

Paying the perfect tribute to Tom Lockyer as the Hatters captain recovers from his on-pitch cardiac arrest at Bournemouth last Saturday, Andros Townsend clinched the points in the 25th minute with a close-range finish.

Bournemouth's Dominic Solanke ruined Nuno Espirito Santo's first match in charge of Nottingham Forest as the striker's hat-trick sealed a 3-2 victory.

AFP

Liverpool close to free-flowing best but Arsenal draw exposes missing elements

By Miguel Delaney

A FINE game, but perhaps the best result for the title race as a whole. Through that, it was maybe better for Manchester City than anyone else, too.

Liverpool, for the second big home match in a row, will believe they again left the full three points on the pitch. That will especially be the case every time they look at that break that ended with Trent Alexander-Arnold hitting the bar.

That's also why Arsenal will ultimately be happier with the result. It just might still linger that they would like that big away win to really propel their campaign. Mikel Arteta's side are top at Christmas, but not quite fully on top form. This draw displayed there's now real substance, much more than last season. There isn't, however, that elevated attacking coherence the league knows they can produce.

That can of course come. In many ways, as enjoyably excellent as this game became, it was maybe natural that a match between two of the three best sides in the Premier League ended up showcasing some remaining flaws in each other. That's what they bring out in each other, as well as brilliance like the two goals. The exacting level from these huge matches.

It is still all dependent on what type of campaign this season will develop into. It is why City will maybe look at it more positively than either team. They haven't lost out too much from this week away in Saudi Arabia winning the Club World Cup.

As to whether it will lead to the club again winning the Premier League, it feels like absolutely everything about this campaign is contingent on whether they put together one of those runs. They certainly aren't convincing right now, but who would doubt Pep Guardiola fixing their issues? The Club World Cup may even serve as the reset that their great rivals Manchester United enjoyed in the first expanded tournament in Brazil back in 1999-2000.

That will also dictate whether Liverpool are ready to win the title. This game again illustrated how the foundation of a fine second Jurgen Klopp team is there but they are missing elements. They are

naturally nowhere near as decisive yet as the German's 2019-20 Premier League winners. They have more scorers they can use, yes, but less truly devastating quality around Mohamed Salah.

Cody Gakpo has such promise here, at this point in his career, it feels like he is steadily a couple of tiers under the elite. He can be very good but you're not going to really fear him. Darwin Nunez's ceiling seems much higher, but his execution can also drop so much lower. You don't really know what you're going to get.

That may not matter if any City drop-off ensures this is a season where the league will be won with just over 80 points. If it goes closer to 90, though, it feels like Arsenal are better set to now rise to that challenge. This team now has that experience, as well as extra quality.

That may seem a surprise given how most of this match went, but this was Anfield. Arsenal did ultimately come away with a point from a game away to a side that previously had one of the best home records in the Premier League.

The game fostered that sense of Liverpool not yet being capable of taking chances.

Dominik Szoboszlai's performance was again a concern after his display against Manchester United, and it now feels like he could do with a refresh. The Hungarian has, until December, had a fine first season at Liverpool, where he has clearly been crucial to fuelling Klopp's side. But he might have been giving it too much, as could be seen from more misplaced passes that were so conspicuous for just how imprecise they were.

Arsenal's goalscorer, it should be stressed, did a superb job of disrupting Liverpool more. William Saliba was commanding, really strengthening Arteta's core along with Declan Rice. You can see how the former West Ham United midfielder was worth the price. In games like this, it often looks like he is playing multiple positions at once.

Arsenal generally had a strange performance where

they were often convincing and looked so compelling in the back-and-forth as the game developed, but there were a series of individual displays that were below par.

Oleksandr Zinchenko, more than anyone, had one of his most testing games in an Arsenal shirt. That wasn't all his fault. Salah looked in the kind of mood where he wanted to destroy, and in the kind of form that recalled his 2018 and 2022 best. There have been more reminders of that in the last few months. He has gone from a ruthless finisher to a roaming playmaker. Zinchenko gradually got a handle on his game, but never on Salah.

The moment that eventually cost Arsenal came from the Egyptian exploiting that. Kai Havertz meanwhile had one of those matches where he seems to counter every three brilliant touches with one inexplicable one. An attempted strike near the end of the game was bizarre, not least in the way he tried to take it.

It is still a measure of Havertz's improvement and impact that this was noticed, and that Arsenal will now miss him through suspension against West Ham United.

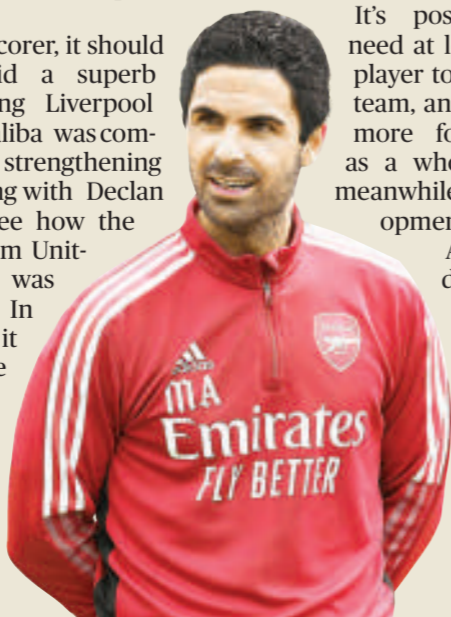
For all the discussion about how these two sides might be short of a certain quality, that shouldn't be at the expense of one key point.

This was a superb match, played at an exceptional level. It was especially enthralling in that coruscating last 20 minutes. The tension between both sides being content with a point but wanting more, while being wary of what the opposition could do, greatly enriched it.

It's possible Arsenal need at least one more player to complete this team, and maybe three more for the squad as a whole. Liverpool, meanwhile, need development.

All of that is dependent on what kind of season this is, though. There was no doubt about the quality of the game.

THE INDEPENDENT



Phil Foden has won it all by 23 and become a crucial cog in a changing Manchester City

By Sam Wallace

JUST six years since Phil Foden won his first significant trophy in the game and the 23-year-old from Stockport has completed the set with Manchester City in a career that has seen him establish himself as the preeminent of the local boys at the heart of European football's most formidable team.

He was one of two City academy graduates from Greater Manchester who started City's 4-0 win over Fluminense in the Club World Cup final in Jeddah on Friday night, along with Rico Lewis. Foden, however, is an old hand at this business. He has five Premier League winners' medals, two FA Cups, three League Cups, the Champions League, the European Super Cup and now this one.

His first was the Under-17s World Cup in 2017, a triumph that launched a number of careers but none as successful as Foden. His role was critical in the overbearing heat of the Red Sea coast. He helped City gain control of the game after a hectic first half. He created two goals and scored another. Against a team of so many Brazilians, Foden is proof that the English game can produce players of a standard to those from the greatest talent-producing nation on earth.

His career is on course to be as gilded as any English player of the modern era



Phil Foden has won every competition he has played in for Man City. Agencies

when it comes to winning trophies. It is indicative of how steep the competition is for a place in Gareth Southgate's England team that Foden is not a first-choice starter currently when all are fit - although that might yet change. As City's team has changed in the last year, with some notable departures, he has become ever more crucial to Guardiola.

Speaking after the game, Foden looked forward to how the conditions and the challenge would be different on Wednesday at Goodison Park. He also said that a run of seven points from their last six games might be the changing point in City's season. "That is why I wanted to win this," he said, "because not only was it obviously a big competition for the club and to win all five as well. But I thought if we won this it would give us the little boost going back into the season that we needed. And now we've won it, that hopefully gives

us that boost going back into the season."

The pressure remains as strong as ever. Pep Guardiola talked about a new chapter for City, and the closing of another with what he considered the last major trophy secured. Foden emerged during the first Guardiola era and will be one of the squad's most experienced players going into the next. There was no doubt what is required.

"When you play for Manchester City, you don't stop," Foden said. "You always have to win. We've won all five but now the job's not done. We've done this, but we want to do it again. You all know how good times are when we win things and how we celebrate, and we want that feeling again. We're always that hungry to keep winning."

"Foden: "I don't think Man City get enough credit"

He was, in his own words, "b-----" with ex-

haustion. The evening was hotter and more humid than the earlier part of the week had been and after the game, the skies over Jeddah released a mighty downpour more redolent of Manchester than the Arabian desert. "Honestly, it was so demanding in that heat and we're not used to that," Foden said. "But the way we handled the game, picked the right times to go at them, and other times just kept the ball, means it was a great result and performance."

A more familiar challenge awaits against Everton and there are big questions over player fitness too. Rodri's injury will be assessed in the next few days. Erling Haaland and Kevin De Bruyne's return is to be soon, Guardiola says, although now the games are coming quickly. "A slog" was how Kyle Walker described winning Premier League titles earlier in the week. For Foden it is still a new experience but he is also learning how relentless it can be.

"I don't think there's enough credit [given to City for what they have achieved]" he says. "It's unbelievably hard and so demanding, every three days playing the game and out of all that effort to say that we've done this is so good. It's our first time being able to win one [Club World Cup] and we have to make sure it's not the last time."

THE TELEGRAPH

Gwiji by David Chikoko



SPORT

Liverpool close to free-flowing best but Arsenal draw exposes missing elements

PAGE 19



Failure to convert chances let down for Simba SC in PL

By Correspondent Nassir Nchimbi

SIMBA SC head coach Abdelhak Benchikha has expressed that failure to convert chances into goals led to his outfit's 2-2 draw with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC in this season's NBC Premier League clash that took place at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Saturday.

Benchikha said his side squandered a lot of chances, especially in the second half, and failed to capitalize on mistakes the opponent made in the first half.

The Msimbazi Street outfit's keeper, Ayoub Lakred, punched the ball into the direction of the onrushing Kinondoni Municipal Council FC striker, Waziri Junior, who calmly slotted the ball in the 88th minute to score his brace while Saidi Ntibazonkiza and Jean Baleke scored for Simba SC.

The Algerian tactician said: "I understand the intensity of these games, which are very difficult, we played a very tough match mid-week with high magnitude, then we had to play a tricky side in Kinondoni Municipal Council FC which is a very good team vying for points."

"We were not clinical in front of goal, this is why we drew the match. I feel for my players and my fans... they deserve to be happy but it's football, we make mistakes and have to work on them for better results going forward," Benchikha noted.

The gaffer was optimistic about Simba SC's plans after the Tanzania Premier League Board (TPLB) confirmed that league fixtures will be suspended throughout January next year to pave the way for the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament and Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals.

Benchikha said: "We have Mapinduzi Cup up next in Zanzibar, we will continue with our program and see how we give accounts of ourselves in the competition."

"I know it's going to be a tough competition with the nature of teams and squad selection, but we are determined to do well," the Algerian noted.

Simba SC's postponed league matches with the initial dates in the bracket are Tabora United versus Simba SC (December 29), Mashujaa FC against Simba SC (December 26), Simba SC against Azam FC (January 1), Geita Gold FC versus Simba SC (January 4).

Speaking after the 2-2 draw, Kinondoni Municipal Council FC head coach, Abdihamid Moalin, said Simba SC's weakness lies in defending on transition and the former had to exploit such weakness by being quick in counter-attacks.

The American coach of Somali origin revealed: "Last time we played the big teams (Yanga and Azam FC) it ended 10-0, today we decided to stick to the game plan for the 90th minutes, while Waziri Junior, George Makang'a up front with Awesu Ally being active in offensive transitions were we were able to catch Simba SC and score two goals."

As it stands, Simba SC has accumulated 23 points from 10 matches and remains sitting third on the log.

As for Kinondoni Municipal Council FC, the club is now sitting fourth with 21 points after taking part in 14 outings.



Simba SC head coach, Abdelhak Benchikha.

Gamondi happy with Yanga's hard-fought NBC PL victory over Tabora Utd



Yanga's Congolese midfielder, Maxi Nzengeli (L), attempts to dribble past Tabora United's midfielder, Najim Mussa, when the two clubs took on each other in a 2023/24 NBC Premier League tie which took place in Dodoma on Saturday and ended in a 1-0 victory for Yanga. PHOTO: COURTESY OF YANGA

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

YOUNG Africans SC head coach Miguel Gamondi was relatively satisfied with his side's performance after walking away with three points against determined and resilient hosts Tabora United.

The two outfits took on each other in an NBC Premier League tie in Dodoma on Saturday, which culminated with Young Africans SC, alias Yanga, grabbing a 1-0 win.

While it was by no means Yanga's best performance, a first-half goal via a free kick taken by midfielder Stephane Aziz Ki gave the reigning champions their 10th league win of the season.

Gamondi's men remain second in the NBC Premier League table but only one point behind the league leader Azam FC.

Yanga has the advantage of two games in hand over Azam FC and is now seven

points ahead of third-placed Simba SC.

Gamondi stated: "It was

very tough. We expected that because Tabora United were motivated, they need-

ed points and played well." "The pitch was difficult to adopt, we could not play

nice football. I am very happy with the attitude of our players, they had a fighting spirit and did what they needed to do," the Argentine noted.

"Our goal was to get three points and we did the job. I am very happy with the result. I repeat the attitude of the Yanga players was fantastic. I want to congratulate the other team because they played good football," the coach revealed.

Gamondi also heaped praises on Aziz Ki, who scored his 10th league goal of the season.

The Burkina Faso international attacking midfielder is the league's leading goal scorer this season so far.

The Argentine pointed out: "Stephane is a fantastic player. I did not discover Aziz but I know what he needs, what he can do for the team, and the tactical approach to put him in the best position."

"He is a player who can win the game. Not many players can win you a game," the gaffer revealed.

He further added: "Today he got three fantastic free kicks. He scored one goal and made good passes. We are more than happy with his performance."

With the NBC Premier League taking a break, Yanga will now shift focus to the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup tournament.

Coach laments Simba wastefulness after NBC PL draw with KMC FC

By Correspondent Michael Mwebe

SIMBA SC head coach Abdelhak Benchikha was left to rue the club's wasteful finishing as it dropped two points in a 2-2 draw with Kinondoni Municipal Council FC in an NBC Premier League game played at Azam Complex Stadium in Dar es Salaam on Saturday.

Simba SC was once again shown the value of clinical finishing as Kinondoni Municipal Council FC's striker, Waziri Junior, condemned the former to a second draw in the league.

Junior scored in either half for Kinondoni Municipal Council FC but Simba SC was left to rue wasted opportunities by Kibu Denis, Willy Onana, and Jean Baleke.

Assessing the game at his post-match press conference, the Msimbazi Street club's boss acknowledged he an-

ticipated a tough game coming three days after playing against Wydad Athletic Club in a 2023/24 CAF Champions League Group B clash.

Benchikha said: "We dropped two points. We were winning until the 90th minute, we conceded a late goal like we did in Morocco. It is unacceptable. We can't accept making mistakes like these in professional football."

The coach noted: "I said before, it was going to be a difficult game because we played a big match in the CAF Champions League. From experience, today's match was always going to be very difficult. I told my players about this."

He disclosed: "We conceded a goal in the first half but we came back and scored two. In the last stage of the match, we made a mistake and conceded. It is football though I am sad for our fans and all Simba SC people."

Benchikha admitted

finishing chances is proving to be a problem for his forwards but they are working hard to solve the wastefulness trend.

"Our first problem is this, we create lots of chances but we don't score. It is a big problem for us but we are working on it every training session," the tactician stated.

The result left Simba SC eight points behind the league leader, Azam FC, albeit with three games in hand.

Simba SC, which is sitting third, is also seven points behind the league-defending champion, Young Africans SC, popularly known as Yanga, which has played one more game.

The league takes a month-long break to allow Tanzania's Taifa Stars preparations for the upcoming African Cup of Nations and some Mainland Tanzania clubs' participation in the 2024 Mapinduzi Cup.



Simba SC's forward Kibu Denis (2nd L) negotiates his way past Kinondoni Municipal Council FC's center-back Andrew Vincent (L) and left-back Raheem Shomary during the 2023/24 NBC Premier League clash which took place in Dar es Salaam on Saturday and culminated in a 2-2 draw. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SIMBA SC

Flexibles by David Chikoko

